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## The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Mao Zedong's Quest for Revolutionary Immortality

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The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution:  
Mao Zedong's Quest for Revolutionary Immortality

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A Thesis

Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of Government  
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

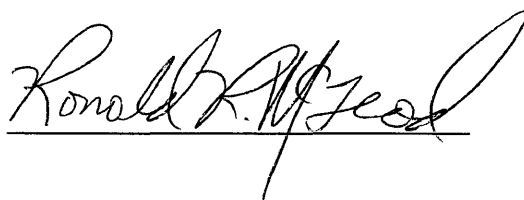
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by  
Ronald R. McLeod  
1990

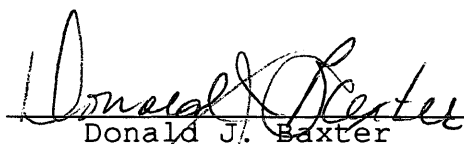
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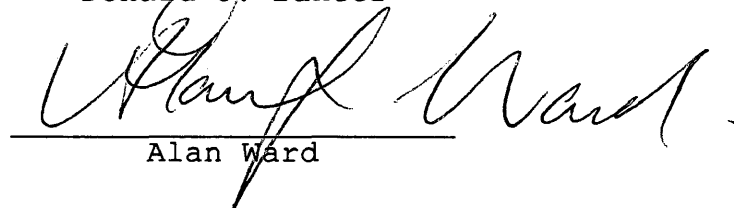
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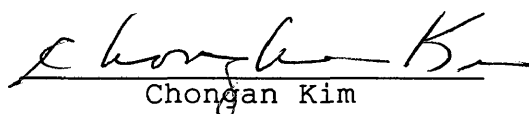
Master of Arts

  
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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to argue that Mao Zedong sought revolutionary immortality, through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Despite his publicly-stated desire to improve China on many fronts, the Cultural Revolution had another purpose: the renewal of revolutionary fervor that characterized China during the early years of Mao's rule, and its essential by-product, the implementation of Mao Zedong Thought into everyday life. Mao believed that if China could be transformed into his unique vision of communism, and if the peoples' revolutionary zeal could be sustained and harnessed to modernize the country, the success of this unusual methodology would secure his place in history. Unfortunately for China and for Mao's dreams, factionalization within the Chinese Communist Party and the social havoc wreaked by the Red Guard resulted in the rise of the moderates, who discarded Mao Zedong Thought for a more pragmatic approach to economic reform and modernization. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution ignited extremist forces that were beyond Mao's control and failed to accomplish his real goal of assuring his revolutionary immortality.

## Introduction

Throughout Mao Zedong's tenure as Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, he struggled to maintain his prominence as the leader of China.<sup>1</sup> Applying his interpretation of Marxism-Leninism to China, Mao formulated campaigns designed to incorporate the masses into the political process. Mao had always championed the peasants; he believed their support was crucial to his maintenance of power. But it was Mao's strict devotion to the masses that eventually led to his downfall. After the failure of two of his campaigns, the Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Great Leap Forward, Mao lost much of his political power. This thesis will argue that Mao contrived the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to regain political power and to assure himself revolutionary immortality. It will be maintained that in order to accomplish his goal, Mao attempted to remove those who opposed his philosophy. The thesis will contend that the movement led to a struggle for power between the Mao and his supporters and the moderates led by Liu Shaoqi.<sup>2</sup>

In the first chapter, several aspects of Mao Zedong's

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<sup>1</sup>Biographical information of Mao Zedong is in appendix A. Distinction between the structure of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government is in appendix B.

<sup>2</sup>Biographical information of Liu Shaoqi is in appendix A.

political philosophy will be explored, including the continuous revolution, the mass line, and "Reds versus Experts". The implementation of his ideology will be illustrated by examining the circumstances leading to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Great Leap Forward will be investigated to illustrate the impracticality of Mao Zedong Thought. The second chapter will address the full scope of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, including Mao's consolidation of power, the campaign to rejuvenate lost revolutionary fervor, the purges of intellectuals and capitalists, the rise and fall of the Red Guard, the involvement of the Revolutionary Leftists, and the eventual decline of the movement with the seizure and trial of the Gang of Four. The third chapter will analyze the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, exploring Mao's campaigns, and the rise of two competing factions, the Maoists and the moderates, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Finally, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution will be reviewed and explained as Mao's attempt to attain revolutionary immortality.

## Chapter I

### Mao Zedong Thought and the Early Campaigns

From 1935 to 1976, the first 40 years of existence of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Mao Zedong was the principle guide as well as founder.<sup>3</sup> Mao devised his own adaptation of Marxism-Leninism to the Chinese model, now known as "Mao Zedong thought." In China, Mao has often been given the same respect and praise as former emperors, almost to the point of deification. During his life, his control over the lives of the Chinese people gave him unprecedented power. Following such political disasters as the Hundred Flowers campaign, the Great Leap Forward, and the Socialist Education Movement, which will be explored in greater depth later, Mao believed it was essential to reassert the people's complete and unquestionable commitment to communism. Despite a record of failed indoctrination movements, he announced the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in order to inculcate communism to the whole of Chinese society. This campaign would be his last massive attempt to indoctrinate the people with his ideology and purify the CCP. Mao wanted only devout followers of his philosophy in the top leadership of the CCP and therefore carried out purges to remove the less zealous party members.

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<sup>3</sup>John King Fairbank, The Great Chinese Revolution: 1800-1985 (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 233-34.



This chapter will argue that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was Mao's attempt to purify the CCP by molding it in his own fashion. It will further assert that, due to his demand for undeviating adherence to his own ideology, the CCP was divided into two main factions: the Maoists, who were ideologues, and the pragmatists. The Maoists' attempts to gain complete power failed, and after 1976, the pragmatists rose to the top leadership positions. The Cultural Revolution was a power struggle between Mao and the pragmatists; it was a struggle between ideology and reality. Mao was unwilling to relinquish power because of his desire to attain immortality. He seemed to believe that without his leadership, communism would wither and his dreams would not be realized. This chapter will conclude that Mao's massive campaigns were poorly planned and far too ambitious to be implemented effectively.

The philosophy of Mao Zedong must be explored in order to understand Mao's quest for immortality, and the way in which he used his campaigns to pursue it. There are four components of Maoist ideology that will be examined below: first, the idea of the Mass Line; second, the continuous revolution; third, the contention between "Red" and "Expert"; and finally, Mao's campaigns. The balance of this chapter will explore these four aspects of Mao Zedong thought and conclude by describing their role in the events which led to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

### **The Mass Line**

One of the most notable aspects of Mao Zedong's thought is the concept of the "mass line". Mao believed that the enormous size of the Chinese population could be viewed as an asset. In essence, the purpose of the mass line was to implement Mao's vision of communism at the grass roots level, the peasants were to be the vanguard of the revolution. It was a strategy designed to involve the whole of Chinese society by incorporating the vast population into the political and economic processes. Mao contended that the mass line would be the most efficient way to indoctrinate China's immense population with communism. He saw the relationship between the people and the party as reciprocal, not one-sided in which the party alone would formulate and implement policy without considering the masses. Mao defined the mass line in 1943:

[A]ll correct leadership is necessarily "from the masses, to the masses." This means: take the ideas of the masses and through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas, then go to the masses and propagate and explain these until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. Such is the Marxist

theory of knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

Mao contended that the party members could learn from the masses and use them to guide the continuous struggle towards communism. He believed that by focusing the attention of the revolution on the countryside, home to the majority of the population, he could achieve communism more quickly. However, the peasants could make judgments only on their own small scale. It was impossible for them to see China as an entire political and economic entity. The farmer had access only to his own village, an obviously limiting factor. The people were not properly educated in agriculture and engineering to be able to form qualified opinions concerning public policy. Therefore, the ideas of all the peasants must be taken into consideration individually and then woven together to create a unified policy which was articulated by leaders. Mao relied on the mass line because he believed it connected him to the countryside where he had initially won support at the grass roots level during the early days of the revolution. He believed that the support of the peasantry of China was invaluable for political unity and for an efficient system of policy formulation.

Mao maintained that the leadership of the CCP must realize the importance of the Mass Line. He argued that the

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<sup>4</sup>Mao Zedong as quoted in Tony Smith, Thinking Like a Communist (New York: W. & W. Norton & Co., 1987), 112.

rural populace should be the focus of the party; that peasants represented the backbone of Chinese society, and with their support, the CCP would continue to grow and the goal of communism could be realized without sacrificing legitimacy. In his speech in the summer of 1955, Mao stated:

[M]ost of the peasants show enthusiasm for taking the socialist road...For them, socialism is the only way out. These peasants make up 60 or 70 percent of the entire rural population....but some of our comrades ignore these facts. This means that their eyes are on the comparatively small number of well-to-do peasants to the neglect of the great majority of the poor peasants. This is one kind of wrong thinking.<sup>5</sup>

Mao also argued that the road towards communism would be easier because of the nature of the rural populace. He stated that the people could be molded into communists because they were "poor and blank". Mao defined this phrase in a speech in April 1956:

By "poor" I mean that we have not much industry and that our agriculture is not so very advanced either. By "blank" I mean that we are like a sheet of blank paper, since our cultural and scientific level is not high. Those who are poor want change; a blank sheet of paper is good for writing on.<sup>6</sup>

After the speech was printed in the *People's Daily*, cries of outrage came from people who felt humiliated by such

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<sup>5</sup>Mao Zedong as quoted Ibid., 118.

<sup>6</sup>Mao Zedong as quoted ibid., 120.

degrading remarks. Mao failed to take into account the tradition of the Chinese people with this "poor and blank" speech. He ignored the thousand year history of Confucianism, which was deeply ingrained in the culture of the peasants. Mao was firm in the belief that because the people were "poor and blank," the revolution towards communism could be accomplished by a series of wide sweeping campaigns. Many people became apprehensive about these campaigns and this fostered a suspicion of the government. To regain the trust of the people, Mao stated it would be simpler to realize the goals of communism in a society (such as rural China), that does not have a strong capitalist foundation (for example Western Europe). In Western Europe, capitalism is so strongly entrenched in society that the whole economic system would have to be changed in order to bring about communism. China, conversely, is not as industrially advanced and would not need to destroy an existing infrastructure but build the first one in the communist design. By constantly gathering and adapting the ideas of the peasants and then making the leap to a more modern way of life, Mao would implement communism in a more efficient manner, without the wide-scale violence and turmoil typical of other communist societies like the Soviet Union. To maintain the level of dedication to communism required by the Mass Line, Mao relied on the idea of the continuous revolution.

The poor and blank speech also suggested that China might move rapidly to socialism but only if the party would do the "writing" on the "blank sheet of paper." The speech further stated that "most of the peasants show enthusiasm for taking the socialist road," and Mao illustrated his faith in the masses by adding, "We must have faith in the masses and we must have faith in the party. These are two cardinal principles. If we doubt these principles, we shall accomplish nothing."<sup>7</sup>

The problem with implementing his ideological goals was the party. Mao believed that it was a poor instrument to carry out his plan or to do the "writing on the blank sheet of paper." He lost further ground with the party because it deleted the rule that Mao Zedong Thought was to act as the guideline for party policy. In February 1957, he gave a speech, "On the Correct Handling of the Contradictions among the People." This speech attacked the party as an institution responsible for obstructing the revolution and that it was the people's responsibility for rectifying this situation.

In this speech, Mao distinguished between "antagonistic contradictions" of the sort that existed between the Chinese people and those who opposed their revolution, and "non-antagonistic contradictions" of the kind that would occur

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<sup>7</sup>Mao Zedong as quoted in *ibid*, 120.

within the people's democratic dictatorship, that is, among the friends of the revolution. Mao stated that:

[T]here are still certain contradictions between the government and the people. These include contradictions among the interests of the state, the interests of the collective, and the interests of the individual; between democracy and centralism; between the leadership and the led; and the contradiction arising from the bureaucratic style of work of certain government workers in their relations with the masses.<sup>8</sup>

Mao stated that the contradictions of the goals of the party and of the people would not facilitate progress for China. Thus, he believed that these contradictions were impeding the movement towards modernization, industrialization and collectivization; in short, these contradictions were standing in the way of the continuous revolution.

### **The Continuous Revolution**

For at least the first decade after the Communists assumed control of China from the nationalist Guomindang (KMT),<sup>9</sup> the CCP could claim that there was a legitimate revolution, one in which the people genuinely authorized the exercise of political power to bring about social change to a

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<sup>8</sup>Mao Zedong as quoted in *ibid*, 121.

<sup>9</sup>The KMT is derived from the Wade-Giles spelling of Guomindang which is spelled Kuomintang.

popularly supported regime. Therefore, the leadership of the Chinese Communist revolution during its first decade was both legitimate and revolutionary. The CCP gained support from all social classes during the Chinese National Revolution in which they seized power from the KMT. The peasants followed Communist leadership because of the party's resistance to the invading imperialist Japanese army, and because the CCP treated the peasants with dignity and respect when they needed to use their land, unlike the KMT who would not pay for items used in the struggle against the Japanese. Students supported the party's cause because it clearly advocated Chinese nationalism, and many college-age men and women joined the Communist army in response to the call to *chiu-kuo* (save the nation). Further, a significant proportion of the urban and commercial groups came to support the party during the civil war because of their belief or hope that the Communists might have solutions to China's numerous economic problems. In their eyes, the Communists were preferable to the Guomindang because the KMT had largely discredited itself through corruption, inefficiency and brutality. The educated and intellectual elites also backed the CCP for all of the above reasons, and because they had accepted fragments of Marxist-Leninism ideology since the May



Fourth movement in 1919.<sup>10</sup>

After the first decade of CCP rule, the revolution began to lose its legitimacy. The road to communism must have seemed very long and slow. The people, and perhaps some leaders as well, became impatient with the CCP. Mao believed that because of the growing dissatisfaction, the struggle towards "true communism" had to be revitalized. Therefore, Mao asserted to the CCP that steps must be taken to reawaken the people's commitment to communism.<sup>11</sup> The period after 1956 marked his preoccupation with implementing the continuous revolution by stimulating grass roots political action and he focused on the ideology of the CCP in this period more than ever before. Chalmers Johnson argues that a partial explanation of Mao's growing immersion in ideology after 1956 was the unprecedented international problems which demanded careful ideological explanation. Khrushchev's anti-Stalin revelations and the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution, were probably influential in Mao's decision to re-examine his own ideological stance. Once started on a deceptively easy-looking path, he found himself committed to ideological positions upon which he subsequently had to act, and the

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<sup>10</sup>Chalmers Johnson, "The Two Chinese Revolutions," China Quarterly 39(July-September 1969): 13-14. For more information on the May Fourth movement see pp. 12-15.

<sup>11</sup>Maurice Meisner "Utopian Goals and Ascetic Values in Chinese Communist Ideology," Journal of Asian Studies 28(November, 1968): 104.

whole process began to escalate in a way that has yet to end.<sup>12</sup> Mao was no longer concerned with applying the USSR's version of Marxism-Leninism to China, a vastly underdeveloped country both politically and economically, but rather formulated large-scale plans to convert China into his version of a true, communist state. He believed that taking such an ambitious approach to the conversion to communism was consistent with, and even required by, the size of the country and the circumstances in which he found it. To indoctrinate a country like China to a radically new way of life, all-inclusive campaigns had to be employed. Thus, the people must be committed to the changes or, in Mao's words, must be committed to the continuous revolution. Mao rejected the notion that social change can be tightly controlled or directed from above, a notion he saw exemplified in the Soviet model. Rather, he believed that the development and resolution of contradictions in society and social progress came about through the interaction of social forces, through the reciprocal interaction between the elites and the peasants.<sup>13</sup>

Mao wanted to move ahead towards Communism in large, incremental steps. These steps were to be his mass campaigns

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<sup>12</sup>Johnson., p.22.

<sup>13</sup>Graham Young and Dennis Woodward, "Uninterrupted Revolution and Continuous Revolution," Asian Survey 18(September 1978): 918.

to change the country from a feudal to Communist society. To guide China through the difficult transition, Mao envisioned the exemplary worker, someone who not only would be a good communist with a tenacious belief in the goals and life style appropriate to a true Marxist-Leninist, but also would possess the skills and abilities to implement these goals using technical knowledge. Mao stated that this person would be both "Red", for his commitment to communism, and "Expert", for the technical skills to implement the goals of communism.

### **Red and Expert**

One of the changes in society that Mao stressed was the de-emphasis of social and economic class. He wanted Chinese society to be completely egalitarian and homogeneous and he explained his interpretation of utopian society in his identification of the "Red and Expert." The red and expert notion combined Marxist utopianism with several other characteristics of the Chinese Communist mentality. Ideally, the "red and expert" exemplified not only the social values and norms of the present, but also the Communist goals of the future. Maurice Meisner states that the red and expert archetype was conceived as the product of existing socialist society and the exemplar of the ascetic lifestyle necessary in the present. He was also the symbol of a more advanced

"communist consciousness," and thus the producer of the broader social goals of the Marxist vision of the future. As characteristically described, the red and expert worker was to be the model for a new generation of all-around man who is a "jack of all trades," capable of engaging in scientific tasks, cultural undertakings, and physical labor. He is a pillar of communist social and moral values. He is not a slave to the past, and has the capability and freedom to be creative and to break the bonds of tradition. The red and expert laborer could handle both civilian and military work; he could combine communist theory with practical work, and would be capable of switching from one job to another as the needs of society dictated. In short, he would be the new breed of Communist man, both red and expert, who was to realize Mao Zedong's vision of a whole nation of socialist-conscious, cultured laborers.<sup>14</sup>

Although, in theory, the vision of the red and expert may have seemed feasible to Mao, in practice such a goal was far from possible. China simply did not have the industrial or the educational capability to produce such people. There were many Reds who carried out the party line and obeyed Maoist thought. There were also Experts who had technical knowledge, but who were too pragmatic and unwilling to capitulate and implement communist ideology in the

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<sup>14</sup>Meisner., p.106.

industries. As previously stated, the vast majority of the Chinese population were peasants who had little access to education to attain the technical knowledge required to be truly red and expert. The contradiction between the reds and the experts led to a great many problems for China, politically, technologically, and economically. Examples of the downfall of the red and expert were quite evident in the campaigns initiated by Mao. One of the clearest examples of the difficulty inherent in the red and expert theory was the Great Leap Forward, one of several campaigns to be explored in further detail.

### **The Campaigns**

The next section will explore the campaigns that preceded the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution; these will include the Hundred Flowers Campaign, the Great Leap Forward, the Commune System, the Great Leap in Industry, and the Socialist Education Movement and Mao-Study Campaign.

In order for Mao's ideology to be proved correct and workable it had to be implemented in practice situations. Thus to legitimize his ideas he set out to incorporate the masses in his political campaigns. Mao believed that, the people's will should be known not so that government can reflect this opinion but so that the state can better implement its programs. In an attempt to merge his theory

with practice, Mao stated in 1962:

Everyone knows that if a factory has no raw material it cannot do any processing. If the raw material is not adequate in quantity and quality it cannot produce good finished products. Without democracy, you have no understanding of what is happening down below; the situation will be unclear; you will be unable to collect sufficient opinions from all sides; there can be no communication between top and bottom.<sup>15</sup>

In order to overcome his adversaries in the party, he appealed to alternate sources to give his policies legitimacy. Two of the main groups Mao turned to were the peasants and the intellectuals.

His first major campaign was the Hundred Flowers Campaign. This two-year campaign was initiated in 1956. Mao's gambit was to appeal for popular criticism of the party under the slogan, "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend."<sup>16</sup> Mao contended that the party could be strengthened by criticism from non-party members. Lu Dingyi, director of the party's Propaganda Department, asserted:

We still have enemies, and the class struggle is still going on inside the country. But our enemies inside the country in particular, have had their teeth drawn... We must keep up a relentless struggle against them; we must not

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<sup>15</sup>Mao Zedong as quoted in Smith, 135.

<sup>16</sup>Smith, 121.

relax our efforts.<sup>17</sup>

Lu interpreted Mao's statement of "Let a hundred flowers bloom", to concern writers and artists, and "Let a hundred schools of thought contend", to apply to scientists. He argued that the reason for the policy was that the country needed art, literature, and science, to be prosperous and strong in order to promote the independent thinking, debate, and creative work which would guide China into the future.<sup>18</sup> When he first presented the idea of the Hundred Flowers Campaign, other top party officials urged Mao not to engage in this campaign because they believed it would result in mass dissension rather than positive criticism of the party philosophy. Despite these warnings, Mao persisted and the campaign was initiated in May of 1956.

The Hundred Flowers Campaign was a new phase for the party, and part of a general improvement in the working conditions of the intellectuals. They were given access to foreign publications, as well as more free time and scope for incentive to work within the system. Zhou Enlai stated, "The overwhelming majority of the intellectuals have become government workers in the service of Socialism and are

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<sup>17</sup>Biographical information for Lu Dingyi in appendix A. Lu Dingyi as quoted by Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 93.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 53-54.

already part of the working-class... a fundamental change has taken place among Chinese intellectuals in the past six years".<sup>19</sup> Mao urged the intellectuals to voice criticisms of the cadres who had been watching over them. He argued:

Most of our intellectuals have made marked progress during the past seven years. They express themselves in favor of the socialist system. Many of them are diligently studying Marxism, and some have become Communists.... There are, of course, still some intellectuals who are skeptical of socialism or who do not approve of it, but they are in a minority.<sup>20</sup>

John King Fairbank asserts that Mao estimated that among a total of, at most, five million intellectuals (i.e., middle-school graduates and above), not more than 3 percent were by this time hostile to Marxism. Therefore, he believed that the Hundred Flowers criticism of the CCP's bureaucratic style and methods would be constructive, representing a "non-antagonistic contradiction" among the people, and arguable within a context of complete loyalty to the Communist system.<sup>21</sup>

At first the intellectuals were reluctant to criticize the party because they believed that if they dared to attack the CCP, they would be in danger of retribution. Therefore, for the first year the intellectuals were silent. In May of

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<sup>19</sup>Biographical information for Zhou Enlai in appendix A. Ibid., p.93.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Fairbank, 293.



1957, one year after Mao had urged them to criticize the party, the CCP launched a campaign to criticize the performance of the party bureaucracy. Once the cadres came under attack, the intellectuals who had suffered under them unleashed a widespread barrage of criticism. The intellectuals rebuked the party in rapidly escalating terms, with its basic premises, working style, doctrines, and practices suddenly coming under attack. The criticisms were so severe that within five weeks, the Hundred Flowers campaign had to be halted.<sup>22</sup>

Non-party members criticized the CCP for the dictatorship of the single party system. The attacks on the party came from both workers and intellectuals. Strikes and protests resulted from the campaign, as the Chinese people voiced their differences with the CCP. The party leaders soon realized that the Hundred Flowers Campaign had led to social unrest, and they took steps to end the criticism quickly. In June 1957, the CCP signaled an abrupt shift from liberalism to an anticapitalist campaign. Zhou Enlai warned non-Communist leaders they would be labeled class enemies if they continued their outspoken criticism of the party.<sup>23</sup>

The Hundred Flowers Campaign ended with widespread

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Byung-Joon Ahn, Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 21.

investigation of intellectuals, regardless of the extent of their participation in the criticism. The campaign also brought internal tensions to the CCP. Many top party leaders were opposed to the campaign from the beginning, and once it proved to be a failure, the tensions grew.<sup>24</sup>

Chalmers Johnson maintains that although the Hundred Flowers episode did not do serious damage to the party's authority, it appears to have inspired in Mao an ideological recklessness that had been absent throughout the earlier part of his career. The Hundred Flowers Campaign marks the beginning of the divergence of two belief systems, that of the communist revolution and Mao's personal ideology, a divergence that appears today to have undone much of what had been accomplished up to that time.<sup>25</sup>

After the Hundred Flowers Campaign, Mao wanted to implement a program of rapid communization and industrialization. Just as he had done in the previous campaign, he turned away from the party leaders and went to the masses to implement his new means of industrialization and communization. Mao wanted China to become a leading economic power; he wanted to surpass the West and contended that it was an obtainable goal. In his vision, the solution

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<sup>24</sup>Tony Saich, China: Politics and Government. (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981), 33, 174.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

of the economic problems in China was to incorporate the idea of the mass line. He believed that a politically strong regime, utilizing the concepts of Marxism-Leninism, could solve any economic problem with previously unseen efficiency. Thus, China would be viewed by the rest of the world as a model to other nations for the speed of its economic development.<sup>26</sup>

His next campaign, the Great Leap Forward, had two main stages: first, the institution of the commune system, and second, the great leap in industry.

The change to the commune system took place mainly in the countryside in the guise of rural land reform. Mao fervently believed that if the peasants followed his directives substantial industrial and agricultural progress could be made without the aid of farm machinery such as tractors and combines. With China's vast population, he believed that the goals of the commune system could be implemented more efficiently than with machinery. The communes' essential principle was to combine several cooperatives into a commune. The work would be distributed from the central planning body of the commune. The purpose system was, first, to indoctrinate the peasants of China in the ways of communism, and second, to collectivize farm land

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<sup>26</sup>Peter S.H. Tang and Joan M. Maloney, Communist China The Domestic Scene 1949-1967. (South Orange, NJ: Seton Hall University Press, 1967), 373.

in the endeavor to make a more proficient agricultural process. The inhabitants of the communes were to work, eat, and sleep together, in addition to renouncing all private possessions.<sup>27</sup>

In theory, Mao believed that the commune system would be the most efficient way to inculcate the practice of communism into the people of the countryside. C.P. FitzGerald argues that the campaign was carried out in a manner that made failure inevitable. The workers performed their tasks without questioning the policy of the central authorities. There was a severe lack of communication between the workers and the cadres who devised the work schedules, which resulted in mismanagement and miscalculations of the actual production of the communes. Men had to be moved to unfamiliar farms, local knowledge and skills were not acknowledged, and the advice of experienced farmers was not respected by untrained cadres, who were ignorant of proper agricultural techniques. Because the new program forced the peasants to work land with which they were unfamiliar, they did not feel compelled to point out possible dangers of the cadres' method. As a result of the unwillingness of the cadres to listen to the peasants, as well as the farmers failure to inform them of possible hazards to their method of cultivation, the crops were often below average and the cadres were not very

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<sup>27</sup>C.P. FitzGerald, Mao Tse-Tung and China (New York: Holmes & Meir Publishers, Inc., 1976), 95-96.

accurate in their assessments of the yield. In fact, they grossly exaggerated successes and covered up failures.<sup>28</sup>

The effects of the miscalculations were staggering. Natural disasters such as floods and droughts were blamed for the food shortages, instead of human errors. To combat these natural calamities, by order of the Central Committee and the State Council, some sixty million people were mobilized for crash programs in seventeen of the provinces, to help salvage the crops. By 1960, the agricultural situation was critical. More than half of the arable land, according to the New China News Agency dispatch of December 30, 1960, was affected by drought or flood conditions; some areas became absolutely nonproductive.<sup>29</sup> Severe shortages and rationing of food resulted from the cadres' inefficient management of the droughts and floods. The people had to endure great hardships in most of the rural areas because of the mistakes of the governmental officials.<sup>30</sup>

The second goal of the Great Leap Forward was to bring about significant advances in industry in an ambitious attempt to increase China's industrial production to match that of Great Britain. In the course of the Great Leap Forward, Mao again turned away from the party leaders and

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 97-98.

<sup>29</sup>Tang & Maloney., p. 399.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

went to the masses to implement his campaign just as he had done in the Hundred Flowers Campaign. He believed that if the enthusiasm of the people could be put to work in industries and farms, the campaign would flourish. Although there was still skepticism on the part of the leaders, they exhibited more confidence in this campaign than they had done with the Hundred Flowers.

The Great Leap Forward was initiated in 1958 and signified vast changes in economic policies of the CCP. Until that time Soviet influence had dominated the CCP but the new policy symbolized one of the first major steps away from Soviet influence and towards Chinese independence.<sup>31</sup> Mao wanted China to be more self reliant. He saw the country far behind the West in terms of industrial development, and wanted to modernize as quickly as possible. However, his ambitious vision led to ever greater economic difficulty.

In the first year of the campaign, it appeared that the Great Leap Forward would be a success: industrial and agricultural production increased. The downfall began when the Soviets withdrew their support from China's industry, leaving a technical void. The Soviets had intended to make China a satellite country by devising all its technical, economic, and political strategies, but the Chinese had no intention of compromising their autonomy to outsiders. The

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<sup>31</sup>James R. Townsend, Politics in China (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1974), 114.

incessant struggle between the two interpretations of communism finally led to a complete break in relations between the two nations.<sup>32</sup> Chinese workers simply did not have the technical expertise the Soviets had provided and there were other developments which also contributed to the failure of the campaign. Industries began to decline as a result of the lack of raw materials, mismanagement and the inability of the country to produce quality goods. By 1960, China was in a serious economic predicament.<sup>33</sup>

Mao was directly denounced by top party officials for the failure of the campaign. One of the main critics was Defense Minister, Peng Dehuai, who condemned Mao for trying to implement the Great Leap Forward too rapidly, and for setting unattainable goals.<sup>34</sup> Peng was purged from the CCP and replaced.<sup>35</sup>

The failure of the campaign to bring about the positive economic changes that Mao forecast caused other struggles within the party. Factions appeared, and with the failure of the Great Leap, Mao lost a great deal of his influence over the CCP. As a result of the poor economic conditions from the Great Leap Forward debacle, the people were poverty

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 112, 120-23.

<sup>33</sup>Saich., p. 38.

<sup>34</sup>Biographical information on Peng Dehuai in appendix a.

<sup>35</sup>Ahn., p. 40-44.

stricken with an estimated 10 to 20 million famine-related deaths, and Mao suffered politically and no longer enjoyed majority support in the party or Central Committee.<sup>36</sup>

The CCP signified its independence from Mao by rejecting the strategy of the Great Leap and beginning a policy of economic recovery. The moderates, who wanted a more pragmatic and less ideological approach to China's economic and political problems, included economic administrators, technocrats and specialists.<sup>37</sup> He faced strong opposition from pragmatists led by Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi, who wanted the party to be the focus of policy implementation and participation in a more pragmatic manner and opposed Mao's mass line approach.<sup>38</sup> However, although he lost a good deal of support, Mao was always at the forefront of the party. Mao regained popularity in the CCP when he addressed the Tenth plenum of the Eighth Central Committee in 1962, stressing the importance of democracy and mass line participation. Mao's difference of opinion with the pragmatists led to his final major campaign, the Great

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<sup>36</sup>Townsend., p. 123-26. Meisner., 250.

<sup>37</sup>A.Doak Barnett, China After Mao (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 23.

<sup>38</sup>Biographical information for Deng Xiaoping in appendix a.



Proletarian Cultural Revolution.<sup>39</sup>

Another of Mao's campaigns which was taking place concurrently with the Great Leap Forward was the Socialist Education Movement. This movement originally focused on the rural peasants but later incorporated the city factory workers, intellectuals, and party cadres. In 1964, it was initiated shortly following the Tenth Plenary session of the Eighth Central Committee. The theme of the campaign was to inform the peasants of the struggle between the socialists and the capitalists. In essence, the movement was outlined in terms of the class struggle as an inevitable circumstance of socialist development.<sup>40</sup> Mao stated in his communique of the Tenth Plenary session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party that the road to socialism was very long and filled with obstacles to block the progression to the final goal. Therefore, the people must be educated to remain faithful to the movement.<sup>41</sup>

Subsequently, Mao developed the Socialist Education Movement two years after the Tenth Plenary session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in

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<sup>39</sup>Saich., p.44.

<sup>40</sup>Gargi Dutt & V.P. Dutt, China's Cultural Revolution, (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1970), 21.

<sup>41</sup>Communique of the Tenth Plenary session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, "New China News Agency, Beijing", 28 September 1962.

1964.<sup>42</sup> The goals of this mass education movement were defined as the use of proletarian ideology to educate and remold the peasants, promote closer relations between the cadres and the masses, overcome and prevent erosion by capitalist ideology, "expose and smash the various plots of sabotage by the class enemies," and consolidate the collective economy. The socialist education campaign also came to be known as the "four clean-up" movement. The four realms to be "cleaned up" were politics, ideology, organization, and economy.<sup>43</sup>

The target of the campaign was the village cadres who appeared to be straying away from the goals of the socialist movement. Mao insisted that committee chairmen, secretaries, accountants, warehousemen, and other village managers had become corrupt and had exploited the peasants. They took bribes, did less manual labor than others, and ordered the people to perform tasks for their own ends, making their own lives better while the peasants gained nothing in return.<sup>44</sup> There were severe repercussions as a result of the corruption of the cadres. Mao contended that the cadres were guilty of

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<sup>42</sup>The Party was only willing to engage the campaign on a small scale where as Mao wanted a much larger effort. Fairbank, 308.

<sup>43</sup>Dutt, 22.

<sup>44</sup>Fairbank, 308.

a grievous deviation from socialist ideals.<sup>45</sup>

In order to rectify the situation Mao sent in outside cadres to replace the local officials. The new cadres settled in the village for several weeks. While there, they cultivated relations with the peasants who had grievances against the corrupt cadres. The officials compiled charges and evidence against the local cadres, and proceeded to use endless interrogation, physical exhaustion, and forced confessions as a basis for their verdicts. At the commencement of the Socialist Education Movement, the cadres retained a great deal of individual control over their jurisdictions and Mao's initial goal, to convince the peasantry of the rightness of the communist path, was eclipsed by the tenacity of the cadres. Liu Shaoqi and Peng Zhen had probably foreseen that this would be the result and had been more willing to accommodate Mao on this campaign.<sup>46</sup>

To reassert leadership of the countryside, Mao announced that the state would clamp down on the free market.<sup>47</sup> This decree was not looked upon favorably by the peasants. In order to placate the people, the Central Committee announced that there would be greater investment in agriculture. The

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<sup>45</sup>MacFarquhar, 295-296.

<sup>46</sup>Biographical information for Peng Zhen in appendix a. Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ezra Vogel, Canton Under Communism, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 204-205.

Great Leap Forward policy had favored industrial development and neglected the growth of the agrarian sector. It was hoped that this equalization would in turn stimulate industrial production. Mao had earlier asserted that more investment in light industry and agriculture would help heavy industry, by accumulating more capital faster, which would benefit the nation's standard of living.<sup>48</sup>

Once the Socialist Education Movement was well under way the next phase of operation was incorporated. This step was an active acceleration of indoctrination of the entire nation in the Mao Zedong's thought, outlined above. A Mao-study movement was broadened from the ranks of the army to embody the whole country. The campaign unfolded through out China. For example, in the province of Liaoning, 70,000 organizations were set up for promoting the Mao-study program. To learn the thought of Mao Zedong became a compulsion for workers, peasants, intellectuals, and even cadres. Mao-study was described as the sole method for every one, every unit, and every department to become more revolutionary.<sup>49</sup>

Mao's ideology was expected to change the spiritual outlook of the masses in the direction set forth by the Chairman. Mao hoped that this exaltation of the movement

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<sup>48</sup>Mao's view on light industry was not shared by the majority of the Central Committee. MarFarquhar, 297.

<sup>49</sup>Dutt, 23.

would enable him to propel the country to a higher level of collectivization, which in essence was the Maoist line. Thus, it would diminish any opposition to his policies. The idolization of Mao would automatically shut out any criticism aimed at him by his political rivals.<sup>50</sup> This deification of Mao also had the ultimate objective of him irreproachable and omniscient. It would be inconceivable that after all this glorification, anyone could pose a direct challenge to his authority; his word was law.<sup>51</sup>

It is extremely important to note that there was a change in direction for the Socialist movement after this aspect of the campaign was implemented. As a newly emerging communist country, China needed direction and strong leadership. Mao may have advocated this goal through his speeches and the rhetoric of his campaigns, but behind this facade some have seen a more suitable explanation of his initiatives. Robert J. Lifton contends that Mao's quest for revolutionary immortality compelled him to initiate the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Revolutionary immortality is defined by Lifton as a sense of participating in permanent revolutionary fermentation, and of transcending individual death by "living on" indefinitely within this continuing revolution. From this point of view, the sense of

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<sup>50</sup>Dutt, 24.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

immortality is much more than a mere denial of death; it is part of compelling, life-enhancing imagery binding each individual person to significant groups and events removed from him in place and time. It is the individual's inner perception of his involvement in what we might call the historical process. The sense of immortality may be expressed biologically, by living on through one's sons and daughters and their sons and daughters; theologically, in the idea of a life after death or of other forms of spiritual conquest of death; creatively, through "works" and influences persisting beyond biological death; through identification with nature, and with its infinite extension into time and space; or experientially, through a feeling-state, that of experiential transcendence, so intense that, at least temporarily, it eliminates time and death. What all this suggests is that the essence of the "power struggles," is power over death.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Robert J. Lifton, Revolutionary Immortality, (New York: Random House: 1968) 7-8.

## Chapter II

### The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

Ostensibly, the purpose of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was to rekindle the revolutionary spirit of the early days of the Chinese communist movement. It was also an attempt to reinstate Maoist policies within the party, and test the loyalty of central officials. The campaign brought purges of the central leadership, especially of intellectuals and those in charge of propaganda and cultural expression. Widespread attacks were made by the Red Guard, groups of fanatic youths sanctioned by Mao in an attempt to rejuvenate revolutionary spirit. The campaign exploded into mass demonstrations that disrupted society and eventually degenerated into a program of terror directed at anyone suspected of anti-Mao sentiments; it resulted in violent struggles between the Maoists and the moderates. Eventually, even the Red Guard divided into rival factions and lost much of its power, leading to the rise of the "revolutionary rebels," groups of workers who tried to seize power from outside the party structure. They too, divided

into different factions, which resulted in their demise.<sup>53</sup>

This second chapter will explore six facets of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution; first, the origin of the Cultural Revolution; second, the purges, criticism and anti-western campaign; third, the role of the Red Guard; fourth, the Rise of the Revolutionary Left; fifth, the Role of the People's Liberation Army; and finally, the Thermidor of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.<sup>54</sup> This chapter will argue that the essence of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was Mao's attempt to regain the power that he had lost as a result of his failures in the Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Great Leap Forward. It will also maintain that the Cultural Revolution was an ideological struggle between the Maoists and the pragmatists. Additionally, it will argue that Mao's final struggle for power left China in grave political turmoil without a clearly united party or Government.

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<sup>53</sup>The notes for the background of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution were taken from the following sources: Byung-Joon Ahn, Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 238-242. Tony Saich, China: Politics and Government, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 45-71. James R. Townsend, Politics of China, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1974), 128-140.

<sup>54</sup>For a brief explanation of the concept of the thermidor as a phase of revolutions, see note 103, below.



### The Origin of the Cultural Revolution

At the end of Mao's previous campaign, the Great Leap Forward, the country lay in economic turmoil and party leaders blamed Mao for the failure. He had lost a considerable amount of his political influence over the CCP and withdrew from the mainstream of politics by giving up the Chairmanship of the People's Republic and the public eye, while retaining party prominence as Chairman of the party. More pragmatic leaders, such as Liu Shaoqi, party vice-chairman and head of state, and Deng Xiaoping, secretary-general of the party, gained more control of the CCP. In this period, it appeared that Mao's authority had diminished to the point that party leaders practically ignored Mao's precepts. The party reasserted its authority, and leaders committed to the pragmatism of the period before the Great Leap returned to prominence.<sup>55</sup> As a result, China's economic performance improved greatly.<sup>56</sup> Mao retreated to his country home in the Yangtze valley and left the government and the

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<sup>55</sup>Liu Shaoqi became the formal head of state of the People's Republic, the senior vice-chairman of the Party; Deng Xiaoping ascended to the position of Secretary-General of the Party. They were accompanied by the restoration of the authority of leading Party bureaucrats such as Lu Dingyi, Peng Zhen and Luo Ruiqing; and the economic planners who had been the architects of the First Five Year Plan, such as Chen Yun, Li Fuchun and Bo Ibo. All had been critical of the policies of the Great Leap and they proceeded to dismantle those policies and to return China to a condition of "normalcy."

<sup>56</sup>Tony Smith, Thinking Like a Communist, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 126.

party in the hands of Liu Shaoqi. He had appeared to have withdrawn from public life. In all probability, he was planning his next campaign.

Jules Archer states that control of the party had gradually passed into the hands of pragmatic administrators and technicians who claimed devotion to Maoist thought, while systematically ignoring its principles. It was Liu Shaoqi and his supporters in the Central Committee who ran the infrastructure of the CCP, the labor unions, the party schools and cadre organizations in Mao's name.<sup>57</sup> Tang Tsou characterizes Liu's interpretation of the mass line as being a leader-follower relationship between the people and the party. Unlike Mao, Liu regarded his role in the party as paternalistic. In his view, the people would respect the judgment of the government because they were convinced it was acting in their best interests and for the benefit of China. Liu's pragmatic explication of the function of the CCP with respect to the mass line was in striking contrast to that of Mao, who appealed directly to the masses and their sense of dignity, power, and importance within the party structure, and to their tenacious devotion to an omniscient figure.<sup>58</sup>

Mao saw his idea of the continuous revolution fading

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<sup>57</sup>Jules Archer, Mao Tse-Tung, (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1972), 169.

<sup>58</sup>Tang Tsou, The Cultural Revolution and Post-Mao Reforms. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 74.

with the transition to this new order. He contended that the current leadership was ignoring his vision for China and was introducing corrupt Western capitalist ideas into party ideology. This contention compelled him to take action. He decided to initiate a campaign to test the dedication of party members to continuous revolution, and to purge the nation of foreign influences.

Rumors of Mao's failing health spread throughout the country and to counter these unfounded stories, Mao announced to the press that he was going to swim the Yangtze River at Wuhan. The Yangtze is regarded by the Chinese who live by it, or on it, as a death trap for those who fall into its waters. The swim in the Yangtze served to publicize the fact that Mao was still a vibrant leader who was physically fit to withstand the pressure and stress of being the Chairman of the CCP.<sup>59</sup> The swim symbolized Mao's readiness to return to the forefront of politics.

Because there were few people he could trust, Mao enlisted the help of his wife, Jiang Qing, and long time friend Lin Biao to devise and implement the campaign to purify the party.<sup>60</sup> In the summer of 1966, Mao had given Jiang Qing a position on the CCP Central Committee, and by autumn she was in charge of organizing a new "cultural

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<sup>59</sup>C.P. FitzGerald, *Mao Tse-Tung and China*, (New York: Holes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1976), 114-115.

<sup>60</sup>Biographical information for Jiang Qing in appendix A.

revolution" as one of Lin's deputies. Her task was to "reform" Chinese music, opera, and art by bringing practitioners of those arts in line with Maoist thought. She spoke on Radio Beijing to denounce rock music, jazz, impressionism, and abstract art as counter-revolutionary western lures "intended to poison and paralyze the minds of the people."<sup>61</sup> Mao wanted the people to take pride in their own culture and discover its superiority to Western ideas. Through Chinese culture, he argued, the people could find the true path of the continuous revolution which would lead eventually to Chinese communism.

Mao's fundamental purpose in launching the Cultural Revolution was to seek out and destroy opponents within the party and government who, he contended, were infected with debauched Western ideas, which included owning Western made products, and to replace them with loyal and dedicated supporters.<sup>62</sup> In the "Circular of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," 16 May 1966 Mao said, "There is no construction without destruction...Destruction means criticism and repudiation, it means revolution. It involves reasoning things out, which is construction. Put destruction

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid, 170.

<sup>62</sup>Philip Bridgham, "Mao's Cultural Revolution: The Struggle to Consolidate Power," China Quarterly 41 (January-March, 1970):1.

first, and in the process you have construction."<sup>63</sup> As the quotation suggests, Mao expected that the Cultural Revolution would identify his enemies. Once the counter-revolutionaries had been distinguished from the loyal followers of Mao, they would be removed from the party and replaced with true supporters of the Revolution.<sup>64</sup>

To carry out the anti-Western campaign, Mao recruited millions of college and secondary school-aged youths. Because his leadership had largely been discredited following the Great Leap Forward, he needed a new power base. He asserted that the youth of China had never known the hardships of life under imperialism, fought a war, or experienced the exhilaration of making sacrifices for the revolution. Simply reading about history, or hearing about it from parents, was a poor substitute for the real thing. Without proper guidance, Chinese youth could easily be corrupted into following a counterrevolutionary path. Therefore, in order to maintain the commitment of the young to the continuous revolution, Mao sent hundreds of thousands of students to village communes to work with the peasants to give them first-hand experience of what it meant to be committed to the revolution. The revolutionary youths were

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid. Mao's enemies were defined as those who had been corrupted by Western-bourgeoisie ideals. This definition was interpreted very broadly; it will be explained in greater detail below.

given the name of the Red Guards.<sup>65</sup> Numbering over two million, they were soon to strike fear into the hearts of the Chinese people. It appeared that no one was immune from their terror.

### **Purges, Criticism and Anti-Western Campaign**

Mao charged several members of the CCP with possessing Western views of politics as well as having Western made products, which he considered to be treasonous. The first to be officially charged with anti-revolutionary ideas was the Mayor of Beijing, Peng Zhen. Early in 1960, Wu Han, a well known Peking intellectual and writer, a member of the CCP and at that time Vice Mayor of Peking, wrote a play entitled "The Dismissal of Hai Rui."<sup>66</sup> The play was denounced by Yao Wen Yuan, a minor literary critic, as a covert attack upon Mao. The drama was set during the Ming dynasty and celebrated the heroism of a virtuous official deposed by a tyrannical emperor for having protested the seizure of peasant lands by rapacious landlords and corrupt bureaucrats.<sup>67</sup> C.P. FitzGerald argues that the fact that this

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<sup>65</sup>The role the Red Guard will be explored below; see pp. 46-52.

<sup>66</sup>Biographical information for Wu Han in appendix A.

<sup>67</sup>Meisner, 330.

play was published and performed gave the signal for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to begin; those who tolerated it were singled out by Mao as his opponents to be purged. The author of the play was a close comrade of Peng Zhen, who was himself a devoted friend of Liu Shaoqi. An attack on Wu Han was, in essence, therefore, an attack on the leadership of the CCP in general, and on Liu Shaoqi in particular.<sup>68</sup> The purge of Peng Zhen sent a message to top officials that Mao still retained power, and that they must conform to a strict Maoist line if they wanted to remain in power. The removal of a relatively low level leader symbolized the commencement of the power struggle between the Maoists and the pragmatists, led by Liu Shaoqi, which was to polarize the top leadership of the CCP. It is important to note that the officials who were the initial targets of the campaign had no power in the central government. Therefore, they could not constitute any real threat to the regime, and the charges that they planned to usurp the leadership would be utterly absurd unless viewed in the context of a power struggle between the top leaders.<sup>69</sup>

Mao continued his assault on the party by accusing it of attempting to emulate the ways of the Soviet Communist party,

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<sup>68</sup>FitzGerald, 105-106, 115.

<sup>69</sup>Ellis Joffe, "China in Mid-1966: 'Cultural Revolution' or Struggle for Power?," China Quarterly 27 (July-September 1966): 128.

which he claimed was corrupting the communist revolution.<sup>70</sup> As stated above, the Soviet and the Chinese interpretations of communism were divergent. Mao was especially distrustful of the Soviets' attempt to dominate China politically as well as economically. Mao's suspicion of the Soviets led to the criticism of top Chinese officials. For example, Mao accused Liu of capitalist tendencies; he equated him with the Soviet leadership, calling him "China's Khrushchev."<sup>71</sup> Mao criticized the Soviet government for ignoring the dictatorship of the Proletariat and claiming that the Soviet Union had reached the stage of communism where there was no class distinction. Mao contended that the Soviets had a definite class bifurcation comprised of a ruling elite and the proletariat. Since a class society remained, Mao asserted that the Soviet Union could not rightfully claim that it had moved past the first stage of communism. Therefore, those Mao believed to be sympathetic to the Soviet Union were labeled as traitors.

At this stage of the Cultural Revolution, in the spring of 1967, anyone having the slightest involvement with either the Soviet Union or the West was labeled a counter revolutionary and a traitor, and the rapidly growing range of the campaign grew beyond what could be considered rational.

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<sup>70</sup>Bridgham, 3.

<sup>71</sup>Smith, 130.



Criticisms moved through the top leadership of the party and filtered down to the cadres who, at the grass-roots level, were charged with the implementation of the party policy and therefore had great influence over the masses. If Western or Soviet ideas were spread by tainted officials, the integrity of the continuous revolution would be in danger. Therefore, Mao reacted by invoking his doctrine of the mass line, and under its aegis, inciting the ordinary Chinese to seize power from below. He authorized the creation on an experimental basis of a new "Revolutionary Committee," an organ of power modelled after the Paris Commune. This Revolutionary Committee was to consist of a tripartite alliance of representatives of the revolutionary masses, representatives of the People's Liberation Army, and revolutionary party cadres.<sup>72</sup> It was Mao's intention to rely on the Revolutionary Committees to replace incumbent officials, especially the low level cadres, with people dedicated to the continuous revolution and Mao Zedong thought. Again, Mao was able to gain a political advantage by appealing to the masses to be his watchdogs. By means of the mass-line, he was able to purge the opposition of its grass-roots constituents.

The allegations of Western and Soviet ties of party members brought an end to several political careers. On the

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid, 3-4. The revolutionary Party cadres were defined by Mao as those leading cadres who follow the proletarian revolutionary line.

surface, purging the CCP of foreign influence seemed to be Mao's major goal of the campaign. There are, however, examples of individuals who seemed to be model party members, who supported Mao and the continuous revolution devoutly, but were purged nonetheless. For example, Peng Zhen, a Politburo member, appeared to be an exemplary party member but was labeled a counter-revolutionist, guilty of practically every anti-party crime imaginable.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand Zhen Yun, another member of the party elite, openly disagreed with Mao's policies and could easily have been accused of being a counter-revolutionary, just as Peng and countless others had. He did not fall victim to criticism, nor was he purged. The inconsistency in treatment between Peng and Zhen, two political figures in similar positions, suggest that Mao had ulterior motives. The elimination of a loyal CCP member on one hand and the retention of an apparent party adversary on the other demonstrates that the party line was not the sole issue of the campaign.<sup>74</sup> The apparently illogical pattern of the purges and criticisms undermined the stated goals of the campaign and suggests that Mao staged the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution for the main objective of removing anyone capable of consolidating enough power within the party to rival his authority. Mao had risen from his political

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<sup>73</sup>Joffe, 126.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid, 127.

retreat and illness during the post-Great Leap Forward period; he was determined to retain power as Chairman of the CCP. Therefore, everyone was suspected of being his enemy and no one was immune from the threat of being attacked or purged. Mao used the campaign as a political tool to remove any individual who had the potential of gaining enough support to break Mao's control of the party.

Another institution Mao believed to be laden with traitors was the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Mao had always been suspicious of intellectuals, especially scholars in philosophy and the social sciences. The Cultural Revolution presented him with an excellent opportunity to question the loyalty of a great many of his long time foes. Virtually all academic staff and many administrators of the Academy of Science were criticized in varying degrees. Those guilty of the most serious "crimes" were placed in special compounds or fields and made to do the lowest menial work. They were also subjected to constant ridicule and humiliation.<sup>75</sup> Mao further used the campaign to test his theory of Red and Expert. Trong R. Chai maintains that party members with more advanced degrees were less likely to be purged or attacked than those

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<sup>75</sup>"Foreign Expert", "Eyewitness of the Cultural Revolution," China Quarterly 28 (October-December 1966): 3.

with only bachelor's degrees.<sup>76</sup> This suggests that Mao used the lower level intellectuals as pawns to intimidate the higher officials of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, demonstrating to them that he possessed supreme executive power and that if they were unwilling to capitulate, they would be subjected to the same political attacks as their junior colleagues.

Another purpose of the criticism of the intellectuals was to make a show of strength by groups outside the party structure. To further his appeal to the masses, Mao wanted to turn the grievances of underprivileged groups against the "establishment" of party committees, educators, and especially high intellectuals. Tsou contends that the Cultural Revolution was a revolt of those outside the establishment against the establishment, or at least a large sector of it. He goes on to argue that the campaign was inspired, supported and manipulated by the supreme leader to perpetrate his crusade to attain revolutionary immortality.<sup>77</sup>

### **The Red Guard**

The ostensible purpose of the mass line was to

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<sup>76</sup>Trong R. Chai, "The Chinese Academy of Sciences in the Cultural Revolution: A Test of the 'Red and Expert' Concept," The Journal of Politics 43 (November, 1981): 1220.

<sup>77</sup>Tsou, 76.

incorporate the people in the political process rather than simply having them put their faith in the leadership. Mao wanted to use the masses as his constituents and as a power-base outside the CCP. Once he had gained their trust and support, he could incorporate them into the party and thus reestablish his political authority. To accomplish his goal of gaining grass roots support, Mao turned to the young, to the Red Guard. The involvement of the Red Guard would prove to be extremely damaging to China as a whole. John King Fairbank characterizes it as being composed of inexperienced youth who were trying to learn revolution by making revolution, and causing great destruction in their wake.<sup>78</sup>

The Red Guard movement was initiated in 1966. Both Mao and Lin Biao encouraged college and high school students to band together to carry out the task of eliminating of the old capitalist ways.<sup>79</sup> They were to attack and discredit opposition elements within the CCP.<sup>80</sup> Students throughout China were enthusiastic to join for a variety of reasons. Inclusion in the movement gave members a sense of power and purpose and a heightened feeling of acceptance by their peers. For those who were more devoted to Mao's purpose, the crusade

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<sup>78</sup>Fairbank, 324.

<sup>79</sup>Biographical information for Lin Biao in appendix A.

<sup>80</sup>Richard W. Wilson and Amy A. Wilson, "The Red Guards and the World Student Movement," The China Quarterly 42 (April-June 1971): 89.

was seen to be a truly fulfilling experience. Others perceived the Red Guard as an opportunity to leave the countryside, to escape the tortuous lifestyle of a peasant. Some viewed the organization as a chance to vent pent up anger at society and the government because of career limitations, work assignments and a sensed discrimination concerning poor educational or family background. The opportunity for status and the thrill of leadership were also clearly essential components to the group's appeal.<sup>81</sup> Why youths joined the Red Guard was at first of little consequence, but as the movement proceeded, the differences played an important role.

As stated earlier, the goal of the Red Guard was to attack the old ways and purge the party of any non-Chinese influences. Their organizational texts included statements such as, "We must remold the being of the people. We must defeat the handful of power-holders in the party who take the capitalist road. We must also criticize and discredit their reactionary line." The manuals also contained proclamations that Mao was the supreme leader of China and that Mao Zedong thought was the official ideology of the party.<sup>82</sup>

The modus operandi of the Red Guard was to carry out public attacks on those elements in society who were regarded

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid, 90.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid, 91-92.

as capitalists and counter-revolutionaries. These attacks consisted of parading the accused through the streets attired in dunce caps and placards that stated their crimes against society. The Red Guard also held mass rallies to vilify and condemn the authorities said to have taken the capitalist road and paraded with the infamous big character posters.<sup>83</sup> These were hung in universities, government buildings and other public places, and were carried through the streets to broadcast the crimes of the counter revolutionaries. During the first week of the movement in May of 1966, the posters were torn down and the students were disciplined, but Mao later applauded the posters as a sign of the rejuvenation of the revolutionary spirit. The movement ultimately incorporated over 2 million students; such was their status that exams were postponed so as not to stifle their revolutionary fervor.<sup>84</sup>

The group most susceptible to the attacks of the Red Guard were the intellectuals. Because many university professors had ventured outside China in the course of their research, it was easy to accuse them of being corrupted by Western, bourgeois views. Several intellectuals were driven to suicide as a result of being shamed in front of their

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Maurice Meisner, Mao's China and After. (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 334.

peers and subordinates.<sup>85</sup>

In addition to attacking Western ideas, the Red Guards' second goal was to purge China of the "Four Olds." These were: old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits. The Four Olds were associated with the exploiting classes, those who were determined to corrupt the masses, capture their minds, and stage a comeback.<sup>86</sup> The Four Olds were seen as elements of traditional, pre-revolutionary Chinese thought, which could arise anywhere. The Four Olds were depicted as a threat to the continuous revolution. Thus, the Red Guard went out among the people to seek out the Four Olds and eliminate them from society, removing the potential for a rejuvenation of the old bourgeois ways.<sup>87</sup>

The Four Olds concept granted the Red Guard free reign to destroy anything or anyone they defined as bourgeois. Attacks were aimed at hundreds of thousands of victims. In many cases, the people being attacked were simply older than the students, because the Red Guards were highly suspicious of anyone from a different generation; they contended that older people had been corrupted by the past and were not truly dedicated to continuous revolution. The Red Guard maintained that all people who held authority should be

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid, 336-337, and Townsend, 133.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid, 337.



removed because they had grown complacent in their positions and were reverting to old ways.<sup>88</sup> Some of their victims may have been singled out just because they were disliked for personal reasons.

At the outset of the Red Guard movement, Mao praised their efforts. With this official sanction, and facilitated by the closure of High schools and Universities in the fall of 1966 through the summer of 1968, Red Guard organizations mushroomed, bringing millions of young people into the streets to demonstrate support for Chairman Mao, to denounce and terrorize those said to be his opponents, and to destroy various symbols of bourgeois or reactionary culture.<sup>89</sup>

However, as the campaign progressed the cohesion of the group began to dissolve. Members differed on who was truly Maoist or revisionist, thus the Red Guard broke into competitive, and even hostile, factions, a development naturally encouraged by government officials who were under attack.<sup>90</sup> This division of the Red Guard demonstrated to the party that Mao's campaign to recommit the country to the idea of the continuous revolution and to purge China of Western influences was not wholly sound. The mass line, which was

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<sup>88</sup>Tsou, 82.

<sup>89</sup>James R. Townsend and Brantly Womack, Politics in China 3rd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1986), 134.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid, 135.

the basis of Mao's doctrine, provided no foundation for making distinctions among competing Maoist groups.

This degeneration of the campaign was enlightening to members of the CCP who had questioned Mao's crusade from the start. In the early stages of the Cultural Revolution they were unable to take action to prevent Mao from carrying out his struggle; later they realized that if the Cultural Revolution were allowed to continue it would lead to utter chaos. These members of the CCP believed that, once the people understood that the Cultural Revolution was merely a show of power, an attempt by Mao to regain the leadership of China and to attain revolutionary immortality, they would reject the campaign as a political game and demand a more pragmatic and realistic government.<sup>91</sup>

Mao had relied upon a group of people who were not actually committed to his ideas. A large segment of the Red Guard saw the movement as a way to achieve personal goals and did not truly believe in the ideology of the campaign.<sup>92</sup> They saw the Cultural Revolution as a way to vent aggression against those who held power over them. Mao gave them license to denounce those people as counter-revolutionaries. Furthermore, although they had carried out the Maoist injunction to awaken the masses, they often aroused workers

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<sup>91</sup>Meisner, 340.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

and peasants to defend the existing order against the youthful, and often arrogant, Red Guards. The almost total lack of discipline, the violent factionalism, and the vandalism and hooliganism that characterized the movement led Maoist authorities in Beijing to conclude that the Red Guards had become a political liability. In 1967 stringent measures were taken to remove "the vanguard" of the Cultural Revolution from the center of the political stage.<sup>93</sup> The excesses of the Red Guard left a lasting impression on the people of China.

### **The Rise of the Revolutionary Left**

Even after Mao recognized that the Red Guard was a liability, he called for a broader based movement to incorporate the country as a whole, a movement to consolidate the political and economic aspects of the campaign.<sup>94</sup> He wanted to execute the program in a major economic center to prove that it was viable as a policy. The next phase of the Cultural Revolution was, therefore, a movement in Shanghai which was labeled the "January Revolution."

To alleviate the problems that the Red Guard had caused, Mao called upon the mass line to take over not only the

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Townsend, 135.

counter revolutionaries, but to seize the means of production. Philip Bridgham contends that the expansion of the Cultural Revolution into the government and the economy caused increasing resistance which, in mid-December 1966, led to a final test of strength when Mao admonished his supporters to "seize power" in all party, government and economic organizations which continued to resist.<sup>95</sup> With Mao's command to the workers to take control of China's labor organizations, the stage was set for the outbreak in Shanghai of what has come to be known as the January Revolution.<sup>96</sup>

On January 5, 1967 a dozen rebel organizations loosely allied with the worker's Headquarters published a "Message to All the People of Shanghai" in the city's leading newspaper Wen-Hui-pao, which had been taken over by insurgents two days before. The message deplored the divisions within the revolutionary movement, appealed to workers to return to the factories, and called for the unity of workers, students, intellectuals and cadres. On the following day more than a million citizens gathered to hold a mass meeting in the central city square. The mayor of Shanghai and other high city party officials were denounced, removed from their

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<sup>95</sup>Philip Bridgham, "Mao's Cultural Revolution in 1967: The Struggle to Seize Power," China Quarterly 30 (April-June, 1968): 8.

<sup>96</sup>At this stage of the Cultural Revolution, groups advocating the mass line were also referred to as the Revolutionary Left. Ibid.

positions, and forced to make public confessions of their political sins. Over the next few days, other officials and cadres were paraded through the streets with dunce caps and placards.<sup>97</sup>

Rule over Shanghai came too quickly for the Revolutionary Left; they were too inexperienced to carry out the duties of the government. Shanghai turned into a chaotic, unmanageable city, overrun by Mao's supporters who lacked adequate organizational skills to maintain any semblance of order. Shanghai was not the only major municipality to experience this overthrow from the workers. Nearly all major cities and provinces were affected by the January Revolution and the "seize power" movement, and local governments accross China soon ground to a halt.<sup>98</sup>

### The Role of the People's Liberation Army

Turmoil increasingly characterized China's politics in the spring of 1967; wide-spread strikes crippled the economy. Perhaps Mao saw no alternative to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to regain control of the cities. Perhaps he foresaw that the PLA would become involved one way or the other, and called on the PLA in order to ensure that he would

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<sup>97</sup>Meisner, 346-347.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid, 9.

retain control of the situation, since the Army would seem to be the natural ally of Liu Shaoqi and the pragmatists, perhaps Mao's decision to call in the Army was aimed at cutting off the pragmatists from this action. Whatever the reason, Mao and Lin directed the PLA to assist the Revolutionary Left in their struggle to gain control of the economy and local governments of the major metropolitan areas. They did not intend the army to fight against the people, but as it became more turbulent, the military became more prominent in administering the government and the economy.<sup>99</sup> The PLA entered factories and communes to institute discipline in order to recover production of goods and services. Where revolutionary committees were established, it was usually the military that assumed the dominant position in the tripartite alliance, more often than not siding with the old cadres rather than the representatives of mass organizations.<sup>100</sup>

The fact that the PLA was willing to solicit the assistance of the deposed cadres was symbolic of the ebbing tide of the Cultural Revolution. The leaders of the army realized from the outset that the unorganized mass line was incapable of maintaining a workable government.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, the PLA interpreted its role in the campaign as an order-

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<sup>99</sup>Meisner, 351.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Bridgham, 12.

restoring organization that would suppress the strikes, overcome the pronounced tendency towards anarchy which had characterized the behavior of the Revolutionary Left during the January Revolution, and re-establish a functional government and economy.<sup>102</sup> In addition to restoring order in the government and in the economy, military leaders decided to rehabilitate deposed CCP cadres to make use of their administrative skills. The PLA therefore emphasized humane treatment of party officials.<sup>103</sup>

The decision in favor of military intervention was both momentous and incongruous, for now the PLA, the most bureaucratic agency of the state apparatus, was called upon to promote what was supposed to be a popular revolutionary movement against bureaucratic elitism.<sup>104</sup> The Cultural Revolution was in an extreme political crisis. Mao was forced to turn to those whom he had originally denounced as counter-revolutionaries to save China from complete disarray.

With standards changing so quickly, months passed during which virtually no social forms could be described as stable. Criticisms of those in authority extended to virtually all government leaders; violent clashes took place between contending groups within the Red Guards and Revolutionary

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid, 11.

<sup>104</sup>Meisner, 350.

Rebels; there was massive shifting of sides amidst a sea of ideological fervor and opportunism; and there was considerable breakdown in work schedules, transportation, and communications throughout various parts of the country. It became difficult indeed for anyone to be certain which group was furthering revolutionary immortality.<sup>105</sup>

### The Thermidor of the Cultural Revolution<sup>106</sup>

Mao's genius for survival led him to reverse his field when he saw the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution out of control. He called upon the PLA to regain control of China's shattered government and economy. To retain legitimacy, he hailed the PLA as a people's army, formed and led by himself, and commanded by Vice Supreme Commander Lin Biao.<sup>107</sup> He wanted the masses to surrender control of the bureaucracy to the army.

By late summer of 1967, the campaign had degenerated so

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<sup>105</sup>Lifton, 140.

<sup>106</sup>Crane Brinton, The Anatomy of Revolution, rev. ed. (New York: Vintage, 1965), 205-236. Brinton defines Thermidor as "a convalescence from the fever of revolution." It is a retreat from the goals of the revolution. Once the revolution has been won the focus is shifted from fighting the battles to implenting the policies and administrating the daily function of government. It is also a chance for the people to return to a regular pattern and lead more stable lives.

<sup>107</sup>Meisner, 357.



completely that the Cultural Revolution Group, the members Mao appointed to carry out the campaign, collapsed. This group included Wang Li, Guan Feng, Qi Benyu, Chen Boda and Lin Biao.<sup>108</sup> They were arrested on Mao's order, due to the ultra-leftist approach of the campaign. In May of 1967, Mao had altered the direction of the movement to a more moderate course; and, those who did not follow the new policy were branded ultra-leftists and eliminated from the Cultural Revolutionary Group.<sup>109</sup> He had succeeded in eliminating any possible political rivals and had regained the political prominence that he had sought in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.<sup>110</sup>

Things were changing at such a rapid pace that it was difficult for the people to comprehend exactly what was taking place, and they were confused as to the proper interpretation of Maoist thought. They questioned how one should distinguish between genuine and counterfeit Red Guards. Further, they asked if the Shanghai Commune was to be an ideal model for all of China, what was one to think of the Triple Alliance which replaced it just a few days after it came into being. For most Chinese, the path to

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<sup>108</sup>Biographical information for Wang Li, Guan Feng, Qi Benyu and Chen Boda in appendix A.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid, 358.

<sup>110</sup>Bridgham, 23.

revolutionary immortality had become obscured and enduring emotional commitment was close to impossible.<sup>111</sup>

With the campaign moving in a more pragmatic path, Mao continued his purge of the ultra-left. The struggle had made the people weary and the goals of the Revolution became blurred in the haze of a political struggle that they no longer supported.<sup>112</sup> People who had once led the battle against Western corruption turned politically passive, and many of their organizations disintegrated or became dormant. Consequently, in the fall of 1968, the tumultuous period of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution came to a close, leaving Mao, supported by the PLA, to rebuild China's government.

With the political situation stabilized and the radicalism of the mass movement stifled, the CCP central committee convened its twelfth plenum in October of 1969. The main business was to recognize that Mao had once again unrivaled leadership of the party. This was done by the formal expulsion of Liu Shaoqi from the party, a decision publicly announced at the end of the month. It was further announced that Liu had been removed from all his official appointments, including that of chairman of the People's Republic, a government position he formally owed not to the

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<sup>111</sup>Lifton, 140.

<sup>112</sup>Meisner, 361.

CCP but to the National People's Congress. The charge was that Liu had followed a "capitalist road" and was a "renegade, traitor, and scab" and a secret agent of the Guomindang who had consistently betrayed the party since 1922. Now it could be suggested that the Liuist deviation was an alien intrusion. The struggle between the "two lines" could be reduced to a struggle between revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries, between a proletarian party that, on the whole, had maintained its revolutionary purity and enemy agents who had infiltrated its ranks from the outside.<sup>113</sup> His main adversary had finally been removed from the political scene and Mao was now the unquestioned leader of the Chinese Communist Party, his victory over the pragmatists was complete.

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid, 363.

## Analysis of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

This chapter will describe the final stages of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution by exploring three aspects of Mao's decline: first, Mao's fall from prominence; second, the struggle for power among factions; third, the triumph of the moderates. Then it will argue that the campaign was a short-term political victory for Mao, who regained his party prominence, but a long-term failure, by a man who refused to modernize, a failure which had devastating and lasting effects on China. Finally, it will be argued that Mao's obsession with revolutionary immortality was the major impetus for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

**Mao's Fall From Prominence**

The cult of personality that emerged around Mao, the legendary Chairman and revolutionary commander, grew, in essence, into a religion from the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966, until his death. In the beginning, the cult flourished on the basis of the genuine revolutionary fervor of the masses.<sup>114</sup> Mao claimed victory in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, though it is clear now that little was actually accomplished by the chaotic and costly campaign. Mao's personal authority

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<sup>114</sup>Meisner, 363.

it is clear now that little was actually accomplished by the chaotic and costly campaign. Mao's personal authority continued, as during the campaign, to serve as the legitimator of policy; party leaders stressed Maoist concepts such as self-reliance, the mass line and the continuing revolution. Official statements asserted that the Great Cultural Revolution was still in progress, and that Chinese society was still engaged in a fierce struggle between the Maoist and revisionist lines. This radical rhetoric discouraged realistic national policies and plans to move China forward. It encouraged, instead, an experimental approach that permitted much local diversity and aimed more at reform of thought and behavior than at attainment of quantifiable targets.<sup>115</sup>

The Ninth Party Congress, which convened in April of 1969, officially declared that Mao was the indisputable leader of the CCP. This was clearly a sign that Mao had in fact not accomplished his goals but it was an attempt by the party to put an end to the campaign. In addition, party leaders maintained that they would execute reform measures in accordance with Mao's objectives, but the implementation of Mao's resolutions did not come to fruition for a number of reasons. First, the majority of top officials had been purged, and the replacements were not united in their

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<sup>115</sup>Townsend, 137.

interpretation of the Cultural Revolution's legacy; they soon succumbed to renewed factional conflict. Second, the institutional uncertainty and disarray produced by the campaign complicated efforts to advance new policies.<sup>116</sup> Finally, the CCP leadership faced a succession crisis: their aging leader was near death, and there was no clear choice of a successor.

Deng Xiaoping was selected by the party leaders to take the political reins after Mao's death but the Gang of Four, the last of the Maoist supporters, thwarted Deng's rise to top party leadership. This appointment by the party was another sign that Mao had lost his influence over the CCP. Consequently, it became obvious that the appraisal and reappraisal of Mao might continue for generations. As the post mortem analysis of his policies took place, his image began to deteriorate rapidly. For example, if Mao's true goal had been to liberate the rural masses, how could he have stood by while starvation and death befell so many of them? Was he more interested in power than in economic progress? The evidence suggests that Mao's objective was more political than economic, and that the CCP revolution was a drive for power by a group dedicated to unifying and controlling China. On their way up, their publicized aim was liberation and a new democracy. Once in power, however, their objective began

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<sup>116</sup>Ibid

to shift toward retaining power. Eventually this led to a factional power struggle and Mao's class-struggle ideology became an abstraction, an instrument in the conflict, not connected with a realistic goal.<sup>117</sup>

### **The Power Struggle Among Factions: the Gang of Four**

Scarcely had the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party closed in April 1969, proclaiming the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution a glorious triumph and having declared itself a congress of "unity and victory," when new political struggles erupted to shatter such "unity" as had been achieved. The struggles revolved around the issues raised during the Cultural Revolution (and left unresolved) and were inflamed by the political passions that the great upheaval continued to arouse. But unlike the days of the Cultural Revolution itself, when the masses were involved in battles against bureaucratic authority, Chinese politics now reverted to factional strife among Communist leaders of the bureaucracy, entirely hidden from public view.<sup>118</sup> This section and the next two sections will explore the three main rival factions and their struggles for power, including the Gang of Four, Lin Biao and the military, and finally, the

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<sup>117</sup>Fairbank, 340-341.

<sup>118</sup>Meisner, 397.

moderates.

By 1972, Mao was growing increasingly feeble. He was no longer able to make public appearances; he withdrew to the Forbidden City, away from public life. Mao's supporters were still in top party positions, however, and their political survival was dependent on the patronage and support of the ailing Mao. The most prominent of his followers were Zhang Chunqiao, the self-appointed leader of the abortive Shanghai Commune; Yao Wenyuan, a radical who wrote a celebrated article announcing the opening of the Cultural Revolution; Wang Hongwen, the former Shanghai textile worker whom the Tenth Congress of 1973 had placed near the top of the party hierarchy; and Jiang Qing, Mao's wife, who was instrumental in the opening of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.<sup>119</sup> Later known as the Gang of Four, they were all members of the politburo and two (Zhang and Wang) were in the standing committee. For the most part, their control was confined to the cultural realm and to the official media, which in any system are extremely influential because they are a direct link to the masses. By means of the media, the Gang of Four was able to communicate its political perspective to the majority of the Chinese people. The Gang of Four also had in its arsenal a devoted secret police force, comprised of loyal supporters and separate from the

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<sup>119</sup>Biographical information for Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen in appendix A. Meisner, 419.



ordinary police, which was dispatched to terrorize those who were labeled counterrevolutionary rightists.<sup>120</sup> The two main objectives of the Gang were to represent the interests of the new cadres who had been brought in during the Cultural Revolution to support Maoist principles and to oust Deng Xiaoping from his position as Vice Premier. The Gang seized the opportunity of Zhou Enlai's funeral to express its disdain for the Vice Premier. Deng was given the honor of delivering Zhou's eulogy, but this was one of his last public appearances as the Vice Premier. Wall posters denounced him as China's Khrushchev and a leader of a capitalist movement. Jiang Qing charged him with being an international capitalist agent.

The campaign against Deng continued with the Gang accusing him of being responsible for riots on the national day of mourning at Tienanmen Square in the center of Beijing, which had been the site of massive rallies by the Red Guard only a decade before. This incident came about when several thousand mourners came to pay their respects to the fallen leader Zhou. The Maoists attempted to disperse the immense crowd and this action incensed the multitude of mourners, who subsequently began to riot. The violence was kept to a minimum because some of the troops sent in to maintain order were sympathetic to the crowd. The protest would later

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<sup>120</sup>Meisner., 422.

become a symbol of articulation of discontent in a seemingly despotic state. The Maoists, however, harbored a quite different view of the occurrence. The Party Politburo labeled the riot as a demonstration by counter revolutionaries. Deng bore the brunt of the blame and was removed from power. There was an appeal to the masses to take part in a campaign to denounce Liu, but to the dismay of the Gang of Four, few showed their support for the criticism. There was a wave of secret police repression, and tens of thousands were arrested as alleged counter-revolutionaries.<sup>121</sup>

On September 9, 1976, Mao Zedong died and the moderates wasted little time severing their ties with the radical Maoists. In early October, with the period of mourning for the late Chairman barely concluded, the politburo purged the Gang of Four, the last remaining Maoists in top party positions. They were seized and accused of having conspired to commandeer state power, among a vast mélange of other charges. Hua Guofeng, a moderate, assumed Mao's post as Chairman of the CCP.<sup>122</sup>

The era of Mao had drawn to a close. He left China with severe economic and political problems. Dedicating itself to

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<sup>121</sup>The notes for the Gang of Four were taken from Meisner, 418-428, and Jürgen Domes, "The 'Gang of Four' and Hua Guofeng: Analysis of Political Events in 1975-76," China Quarterly 71 (September-December, 1977): 473-497.

<sup>122</sup>Biographical information for Hua Guofeng in appendix A. Meisner, 426.

a more pragmatic style of policy, the CCP leadership including Hua Guofeng was determined to restore the economic program of the post-Great Leap Forward period, and one of its first courses of action was to initiate a rectification campaign to reinstate officials purged during the tumultuous period of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

### **Lin Biao's Last Stand**

In 1969, Lin Biao had reached the number two spot in the party next to Mao and was designated successor to the top leadership position. Lin brought the military into increasing prominence in both party and government. While the military was divided between the Central Military Command at Beijing and the regional commands in the provinces, General Lin Biao, PLA Chief of Staff, was Mao's designated successor.<sup>123</sup>

Shortly, differences arose between him and Mao. For example, Mao wanted to bring about the rapid restoration of the party, which was for him the first and most essential order of domestic business.<sup>124</sup> In the later stages of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the PLA had become the dominant force in the political life of the nation and Mao

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<sup>123</sup>Fairbank, 334.

<sup>124</sup>Meisner, 400.

wanted to de-emphasize its role in favor of a more bureaucratized system of government. Lin Biao was opposed to the restoration of old cadres. The more the party was strengthened through the return of pre-Cultural Revolution officials, the less power Lin Biao had. Consequently, in the fall of 1969, at the Ninth Congress, Lin proposed that the policies implemented in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution should continue to be in use. Lin did not have any strong base of support in the Party Congress; his proposal was unsuccessful, and resulted in a rift between Lin and Mao. Mao began to suspect Lin of personal ambitions. According to Mao, Lin and his cohort Chen Boda carried out a surprise attack at the Second Plenum of the Ninth Congress of the Central Committee known as the Lushan meeting. This attack consisted of speeches critical of the foreign and domestic policies of Zhou Enlai, surprising only because their content was not discussed with Mao beforehand.<sup>125</sup>

As a result of Lin's power move, moderates criticized him for obstructing the process of party rebuilding. Moreover, the Party Congress endorsed new foreign policies designed by Zhou Enlai which were based on peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems. Still, Lin Biao was a formidable political force. He was not only Mao's official heir apparent and China's Minister of

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<sup>125</sup>Ibid, 402.

Defense, had emerged from the Cultural Revolution with a popular prestige seemingly second only to that of the Chairman himself. Dating back to the Long March, Lin had been one of the great heroes and leaders of the Chinese Revolution and one of Mao's closest comrades. Further, the extent of military support Lin commanded was unknown in autumn of 1970.

Lin Biao strongly supported the Cultural Revolution but it was widely apparent that the CCP had taken a major turn away from these ideologically based policies in favor of more pragmatic methods of running the country. Following the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee at Lushan, Mao set up party committees in all the provinces, effectively subordinating the provincial revolutionary committees, which had been endorsed by the General.<sup>126</sup> Lin, it was clear, no longer subscribed to Mao's views; his subsequent removal from power was inevitable. This, however, would not come cleanly or simply. A power struggle ensued between Mao and Lin which ended rather mysteriously.

According to Maurice Meisner, Lin Biao plotted a coup d'état that involved an attempt to assassinate Mao Zedong. A document known as "Outline of the '571 Project'", supposedly the plan to murder the Chairman, stated that the plotters "planned to attack Chairman Mao's special train with

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<sup>126</sup>Ibid, 404.

flamethrowers and bazookas, dynamite the Shuofang railway bridge near Suzhou over which the train was scheduled to pass, bomb the train from the air or blow up the oil depot near the stop of the train in Shanghai."<sup>127</sup> If this plan failed, the Chairman was to be shot by a member of his own bodyguard when he reached Shanghai. The plan never came to fruition. Zhou Enlai acknowledged in a meeting with a group of American newspaper editors in Late 1972 that the "571 Project" was never put into operation. There was, in fact, no attempt on Mao's life and no effort to carry out the alleged coup; instead, fearing the plot had been discovered, Lin hastily fled on the ill-fated plane that crashed in Mongolia. Whatever Lin Biao's motives, his demise, and the purge of his supporters in the party, PLA, and revolutionary committees, removed the last barriers to the consolidation of the post-Cultural Revolution order which Mao and Zhou designed.<sup>128</sup>

### **The Triumph of the Moderates**

Elite conflict in the 1970s combined elements of both the initial and latter stages of the Cultural Revolution. Generally, leaders tried to contain conflict, to avoid open

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<sup>127</sup>Ibid, 406.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid, 406.

charges and mass mobilization in their struggles and to keep purges secret until after the event; the two key purges, of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, brought mass criticism campaigns only after the victors had acted against their targets.

By 1972, Zhou was the active party leader, as Mao increasingly withdrew from public life.<sup>129</sup> Zhou supported a policy of reinstating in their original positions cadres who had been purged in the course of the Cultural Revolution. These reinstated cadres effectively replaced those who had taken their posts during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution by 1973. Mao supported this policy, attempting to balance the radical and moderate factions of the party.<sup>130</sup> He maintained that China could utilize their skills as experienced bureaucrats. The decline of Mao's ideologically based policies made possible more moderate and pragmatic approaches. China desperately needed a leader who could formulate programs designed to deal with her real and pressing political and economic problems.

Zhou's tenure as Premier lasted from 1972 until his death in January 1976. Deng Xiaoping, now Chief of Staff of the PLA, who had essentially taken over Zhou's duties during the premier's illness, was unable to consolidate power and

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<sup>129</sup>Townsend, 323.

<sup>130</sup>Meisner, 409.

Mao denied him the premiership. Still holding some political reins, Mao was unwilling to let either the moderates or the radicals have complete control. Consequently, Hua Guofeng became premier as a compromise between the competing factions. His position was not solid, however, despite his claims that he was Mao's personal choice. Hua's main objective was to consolidate the factions and once again to have a united party.

After the purge of the Gang of Four, the CCP rested on a broad coalition. The CCP leadership enjoyed prominent support from the military, in spite of the Lin Biao disaster; the majority of the factionalized PLA sided with the moderates. The moderates, called for the restoration of Deng. Hua initially resisted restoring Deng to his previous party and government positions but was eventually persuaded and he and Deng maintained a working relationship in advancing modernization policies. There were evident differences between Hua and Deng, however, with Hua emphasizing intellectual and educational reforms and Deng more emphatic about the need for economic, scientific, and technical advances.<sup>131</sup>

Deng and his supporters became more aggressive in 1978, pushing for further diminution of Mao's stature and demotion of several Politburo members associated with Deng's 1976

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid., 326.



setback. For example, Wu De, the mayor of Beijing, who had led the suppression of the Tiananmen demonstration and subsequent criticism of Deng, was removed from office. Others to fall victim to Deng's wrath were Chen Xilian, commander of the Beijing military region, Ji Dengkui, party ideologist of the Beijing region and Wang Dongxing, member of the Politburo Standing Committee and the head of the security establishment.<sup>132</sup> Since removal of these men would strip Hua of much of his Politburo support, the campaign suggested that Deng might be seeking Hua's post. Deng's supporters openly criticized the crack down on the April Fifth Movement and denounced the Cultural Revolution, but stopped short of condemning Mao's entire post-1965 career. These themes were also very threatening to Hua, whose position rested very heavily on Mao's endorsement and the Tiananmen affair.<sup>133</sup>

The Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee, held in December 1978, confirmed Deng's political ascendancy to Chief of Staff of the PLA and began a major new phase of Chinese politics. In addition to endorsing many demands associated with him, reversal of the Tiananmen verdict, continued rehabilitation of veteran cadres, the stronger criticism of the Cultural Revolution, the Plenum added several of Deng's supporters to the Politburo and to other

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<sup>132</sup>Biographical information for Chen Xilian, Ji Dengkui and Wang Dongxing in appendix A.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 327.

high state and party posts. There was compromise, too, as Hua initially retained his leading positions and considerable Politburo support; however, the victory of Deng, rather than the compromise with Hua, turned out to be the lasting result of the Third Plenum. Peng Dehuai and Liu Shaoqi were posthumously rehabilitated. Criticism of Mao and the Cultural Revolution increased in volume and in severity. This had a direct impact upon Hua Guofeng because he was the last remaining leader from the Mao Zedong era. The criticism marked the final stage of Hua's decline in power. He ceded the premiership to Zhao Ziyang in 1980.<sup>134</sup> In 1982, the post of party chairman was abolished and Hua lost his Politburo seat (although as of 1985, he still retained a seat on the Central Committee).<sup>135</sup>

The Maoist era had in reality come to an end with the fall of Hua. The moderates had a firm grip on the political reigns and the party was consolidated for the first time since the post-Great Leap Forward period.

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<sup>134</sup>Biographical information for Zhao Ziyang in appendix A.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., 328.

## Chapter IV

### Conclusion

This chapter will summarize the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. It will illustrate the scope of the thesis by analyzing the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, seen through several elements of Mao Zedong's thought. It will also appraise the power struggle between Mao and the moderates led by Liu Shaoqi. In addition, it will evaluate the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution as a case study of relying too greatly on a policy that is idealistic and ignores reality.

Finally, this thesis will assert that the underlying basis for the campaign was Mao's desire for revolutionary immortality. The thesis will conclude that Mao's obsession with securing his place in history led him to eliminate any possible threats to his power, at great cost to China.

### **Analysis of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution**

From the beginning of Mao's involvement with the Chinese Communist Party, he was loyal to the peasantry. He was devoted to those who had helped the CCP wrest power from the KMT. Mao developed his ideology with the peasants foremost in his thoughts. The mass line theory argued that reliance

upon the people as a whole was the most efficient method to bring about rapid industrialization. The continuous revolution was designed to maintain the enthusiasm sparked by the struggle for freedom from the previous, repressive government and to channel this energy to bring about total socialism. Similarly, the idea of the Reds versus Experts, a struggle between the Maoists and the moderates, was to give more control of production to the people and less to the technological elite, who were Mao's enemies.

This section of the thesis will analyze the importance of Mao Zedong thought in the implementation of the Great Cultural Revolution. The main ideas that Mao wanted to inculcate in the lives of the people of China were the continuous revolution, mass line participation, and reliance upon the official party ideology, coupled with technical competence to bring about rapid industrialization, summarized under the slogan red and expert. Each of these three examples of Mao Zedong thought will be explored and appraised individually.

The Continuous Revolution. Mao's belief that the people were losing their revolutionary fervor may have been correct, but the revolution had already been won. They had committed themselves to the new government and were making slow progress in the transition to communism. Mao wanted to expedite the reform of China's political system because traditional Confucianism as well as Western capitalist

influences still remained after the revolution. Mao contended that their presence was hazardous to the system; that people could become corrupted by them. Under the slogan of the continuous revolution, he turned to the young to revive revolutionary enthusiasm and used the Red Guard to mobilize and politicize them. Dependence upon a group of high school and college students to carry out the campaign proved to be one of the most catastrophic mistakes of the Cultural Revolution. They became intoxicated with power and employed the movement to sure their selfish ambitions.

Wanton destruction by the Red Guard resulted in two problems for Mao and his supporters. First, the Red Guard purged, imprisoned, or murdered thousands of cadres and intellectuals, as well as many others who had nothing to do with the government. This indiscriminate persecution created a void in the bureaucracy and much of government came to a halt. Untrained and ineffective replacements were unable to carry out the duties of the state. China's economy and political system could not function and the country collapsed in chaos.

Second, the intemperance of the Red Guard compelled Mao to initiate a tripartite alliance between the new Leftists, the PLA, and the rectified cadres to regain order. This coalition was evidence that the idea of a continuous revolution was a failure.

The Mass Line. Mao's idea in the mass line campaign was to

involve as many people as possible in the party in order to lend a great measure of legitimacy to the CCP. The people would be more willing to support the system if they were incorporated into it. Mao's mass line campaign was a complete failure. He failed to realize from the debacle of the Great Leap Forward that mass participation in a country as large as China was simply not an efficient method of industrialization. Poor planning and leadership resulted in a great leap backwards instead of a progressive industrialization of China. What Mao should have learned from the Great Leap Forward is that reliance upon an idealistic philosophy, such as the concept of mass line participation, cannot serve as a substitute for the use of trained technocrats. He believed too strongly that faith in the peasantry was a suitable replacement for experience and education; he felt that people could solve any problem, whether economic, political, or social, merely by strength in numbers. The Great Leap Forward was a clear example of the flaws of the mass line theory.

However, Mao clung tenaciously to the masses by relying upon them again in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In this case, he relied upon the Red Guard. This group of youths was eager to join in the struggle because as a mass movement, it was able to gain a great deal of autonomy. Over two million students were involved in the Red Guard, but as the Great Leap Forward proved, numbers alone were not enough

to bring about advances in industrialization or politicization. The members of the Red Guard were taken out of their environment and thrust into a situation that was destined to bring chaos, destruction, and turmoil as they tried to purge bureaucrats, intellectuals, pragmatists, capitalists and industrial managers.

Once these groups were eliminated, the Maoists were left to run the system, but the peasants and students did not possess the ability to administer the country effectively. Most Chinese people were trained for only one task, such as farming or working in factories. They had no management or technical skills to maintain production and the factories were unable to function without properly educated administrators.

The mass line was a failure. Mao was unable to learn from his previous mistakes. Without skilled managers to run the industries, or bureaucrats to carry out policy, or intellectuals to criticize the government to point out weaknesses to be corrected, the system ceased to function. Red and Expert. Mao believed that the intellectuals and technocrats, the so called "Experts", were corrupt and were plotting to overthrow the system. This conviction compelled him to replace them with the Reds, the peasants who, in Mao's eyes, were truly dedicated to China. In order for the system to be preserved, Mao felt that the people should have a strict devotion to the party and one of the main goals of

the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, therefore, was to indoctrinate the people, specifically the young, to the practice of Chinese Communism as perceived by its leader. This infusion of Mao Zedong thought was believed to be a sufficient substitute for the use of trained technicians in the bureaucracy and industries.

As the campaign continued, it became increasingly clear that Mao had in fact made a serious error with the implementation of the Red idea. Chaos, inefficiency, and the near complete collapse of both bureaucratic and industrial production resulted from the implementation of the concept. Ordinary workers did not have the proper training to run the government or the factories. Instead of bringing about a more productive commerce and a more proficient bureaucracy, the Reds stifled the system, which regressed due to their inability to fulfill technical and managerial duties. Mao was simply unwilling to believe that people trained specifically for the tasks of managing factories and running the bureaucracy were needed to maintain efficient production. Workers with very limited technical knowledge were helpless without the aid of the engineers and bureaucrats. Mao's preoccupation with being Red as distinct from Expert reflected a crucial confrontation between revolutionary purity and modern technology. The glorification of Redness and the undermining of Expertness threatened to eliminate the



intellectuals as a functioning group.<sup>136</sup> This profound mistake contributed to bringing China's government and industry to a standstill.

### **The Struggle for Power**

After falling from power, due to the failure of the Great Leap Forward, Mao temporarily retired from politics to devise a strategy to regain his lost prominence. The main objective was to oust the leaders who stood in his way. To accomplish this, Mao attempted to divide the party into those who supported him, and those who followed Liu Shaoqi, and other moderates. Mao was able to mobilize enough support to gain control of the Party Congress by accusing the moderates of being Western capitalists. He indicted loyal leaders on such a mass scale that it was impossible to substantiate his charges.

No one was above suspicion. Mao contended that the whole governmental bureaucracy as well as intellectuals had been corrupted by Western elements. This wide-scale accusation was, in reality, the method by which Mao sought to regain his lost power. His success came at great expense. Victory was claimed by Mao, and by those who had avoided falling victim to his wrath, in 1969, but the spoils of the

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<sup>136</sup>Lifton, 53.

triumph were hollow. When the campaign ended, Mao could claim leadership in name only. Mao held only de jure leadership while the moderates possessed de facto control of the CCP.

### **Revolutionary Immortality**

Throughout this thesis, Robert Lifton's term "revolutionary immortality" has been suggested as one of the factors which led Mao to such drastic actions. Lifton argues that Mao was confronted with his own mortality and desperately sought measures to insure his place in history. Lifton further asserts that for a man in Mao's position, of his age and special commitments, the affirmation of a sense of immortality is crucial. The overwhelming threat is not so much death itself as the suggestion that his "works" will not endure.<sup>137</sup> Mao's ultimate fear, the image of extinction that haunted him, was the death of the revolution. When he criticized the Red Guard's inability to fulfill its goals, his overriding concern was that the revolutionary legacy would be squandered. Mao seems to have believed that if the revolutionary perished, the revolution would perish as well.

Mao's quest to live forever in the hearts and minds of his countrymen can serve as an explanation for his apparently

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<sup>137</sup>Ibid, 14.

irrational decision to launch the the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. As presented in this thesis, there is much evidence that the Cultural Revolution represents the culmination of a series of conflicts surrounding his campaigns, and of Mao's increasing inability to fulfill the visions or achieve the transformations of the physical and spiritual environment claimed by the campaigns.<sup>138</sup> In fact, one could view the entire Cultural Revolution as Mao's demand for renewal of communist life. In other words, it was a call for reassertion of revolutionary immortality.

Mao's ultimate purpose may have been to transform China into communism or an industrial power, but his more immediate motives appear to have been much more selfish. He wanted to secure his place in history as the greatest leader of China. He wanted nothing to stand in his way and he eliminated ruthlessly those he saw as threats to his power. As a result of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, China was set back economically, politically, industrially and educationally. Ironically, Mao may have been successful in attaining immortality, but he may be remembered more for his opportunistic political exploits than for leading China to communism and modernity.

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<sup>138</sup>Ibid, 21.

## Appendix A

### Biography of Major Political Figures

1. **Chen Boda** was one of the co-leaders of the Cultural Group. It was composed mainly of radical intellectuals and its purpose, as a quasi-official agency, was to guide the Cultural Revolution. The Group assumed many of the powers of the Party Central Committee and Politburo. Chen was elevated to one of five members of the party's Standing Committee of the Politburo as well as being Mao's personal secretary. His political demise came when he was directly linked to Lin Biao in a coup attempt with Lin Biao. Chen was purged from the party and labeled as "China's Trotsky."

2. **Chen Xilian** was the Commander of the Beijing military region. In autumn 1978 he was targeted by anti-leftists as one of the few zealous supporters of Maoist thought. His removal marked a further reduction in Hua Guofeng's power.

3. **Chen Yun** was appointed a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party's Politburo in 1949. He was one of China's main economic planners and was principally responsible for the First Five Year Plan of 1953-57. He criticized the Great Leap Forward and was purged from the party. After the Maoist era, Chen was reinstated to advise in the rebuilding of China's economy by Hua Guofeng in 1977.

4. **Deng Xiaoping**, a party activist since the early 1920's, was the last of the May Fourth generation of Chinese

Communist leaders. He made significant contributions to the revolutionary effort which he earned a prominent place in the party. Deng sided with Liu Shaoqi in the post-Great Leap period. As a result, he was purged while acting as Party General Secretary. In 1973 he was reinstated to his party post.

**5. Guan Feng** was a member of the Cultural Revolution Group and was one of the leading writers and propagandists of the early stages of the campaign. He was also a member of the May 16 Group which was comprised of highly devoted Maoists. He was eventually identified as an "ultra-left conspirator" and purged in the late summer of 1969.

**6. Hua Guofeng** was extremely loyal to Mao and a lifelong bureaucrat. He rose through the party ranks to Minister of Public Security and eventually to Premier of the State Council. Relatively unknown in the party mainstream, he was seen by Mao as a moderate. Hua had no true ties to either the hard-line Maoists or the pragmatists. Mao hoped that he would be a stabilizing force in the party, thus Hua was named Mao's successor. Hua's greatest political triumph was getting rid of the Gang of Four; this action elevated him to Chairman of the party in autumn of 1976. He immediately attempted to institute moderate programs, re-establish the educational system and reinstate intellectuals to their previous positions. He began to lose power to his eventual successor, Deng Xiaoping, as a result of his failed Ten Year

Plan.

7. **Jiang Qing**, Mao's wife and member of the Gang of Four, assisted Mao with the initiation of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. She led the first assault against Western music, fashion and other cultural influences. In 1976 she was tried as a member of the Gang of Four and found guilty of conspiracy.

8. **Ji Dengkui** was the Commissar of the Beijing region. Like Chen Xilian, he was removed by anti-leftists in autumn 1978.

9. **Lin Biao** replaced Peng Dehuai as Defence Minister in 1959. This move was Mao's attempt to politicize the PLA and make it his power base in the Cultural Revolution. Lin was Mao's chosen successor until his over ambitious attempt to assassinate Mao in 1971 was discovered. His demise came about as a result of a plane crash while trying to flee the country for refuge in the Soviet Union.

10. **Liu Shaoqi** was one of five members of the Standing Committee of the CCP Politburo in 1949. Ten years later, Liu took the position of Chairman of the People's Republic, which was a governmental post. In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, he was Mao's main political rival because he supported a more pragmatic approach to Chinese politics. He was purged by Mao at the end of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1969. After his death Liu was readmitted to the Communist Party and his purge was

denounced.

**11. Lu Dingyi** was a top party official and was most famous for his speeches which inspired the Hundred Flower's Campaign. He supported and encouraged intellectuals to express themselves freely in the campaign.

**12. Mao Zedong** was China's most notable political figure. He was one of the founding members of the Chinese Communist Party and was party Chairman from the revolution in 1948 to his death in 1976. Mao was the one of the most noted leaders during the Revolution. He ascended to top the party position after the revolution because of his strong leadership. Mao was committed to orchestrating China on a path to his version of communism. He was a ruthless leader who purged anyone who opposed his ideology, especially during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The Red Guard, groups sanctioned by Mao, were responsible for purging the majority of those who were accused of having Western-bourgeois ideals. Among his other political campaigns were the Great Leap Forward, which was an attempt to industrialize China and be competitive in the world economy; the Hundred Flowers Campaign, which was an attempt to incorporate intellectuals into the communist system. Using the campaigns as a political vehicle, Mao attempted to implement his ideology in the CCP and the government which permeated Chinese society. His political philosophy was published in small red covered books. These books were carried by millions of Chinese

supposedly to give them guidance from their Chairman. Near the end of his life Mao was concerned that his vision of revolution would not be carried out to its end; he became increasingly concerned that his legacy would perish when he died. In part, his suspicions were true because soon after his death a power struggle ensued and the moderates eventually assumed control of the party.

**13. Peng Dehuai** was a veteran revolutionary who had played a major role in the formation of the Red Army. He rose through the military to attain the position of Minister of Defense. He lead an attack on the policies of the Great Leap Forward. Peng condemned communization, the collapse of national planning, the alienation of the party from the masses And the oppressive economic conditions and political practices, all of which he attributed to the "petty bourgeois fanaticism" of Maoists. For his outspokenness, Peng was subsequently purged at the outset of the Cultural Revolution.

**14. Peng Zhen** was an anti-Maoist and leader of the Beijing Communist Party. He criticized Mao for the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Mao purged him for obstructing the campaign and he is most famous for being the first political victim of the Cultural Revolution.

**15. Qi Benyu**, similar to Guan Feng, was a member of the Cultural Revolution Group and the May 16 Group, met the same political fate by being purged in the late autumn of 1969.

**16. Wang Dongxing** controlled the secret police in



Shanghai. He is most famous for arresting the Gang of Four in 1976 after Mao's death. Also, he was the head of the security establishment, and led the so-called "whatever faction" after Mao's death. He was subsequently purged by Deng Xiaoping for having remote ties to the Maoists.

**17. Wang Hongwen** was the leader of the Revolutionary Revolt of Shanghai Workers. This group was created by Shanghai workers and had no affiliations with the party or the government. They proclaimed loyalty to Mao and the movement but interpreted Maoist principles to suit their own needs. Wang formed an alliance with Zhang Chunqiao to incorporate the workers into the Cultural Revolution. He eventually became a member of the party's ruling Standing Committee of the Politburo with Zhang. His most famous role in the Cultural Revolution was as a member of the Gang of Four.

**18. Wang Li**, ultra-leftist, member of the Cultural Revolution Group and radical intellectual reached his political peak in 1967 when the ultra-leftists appeared to be gaining political ground. This was short lived, however, because he was accused of being a counter-revolutionary and was purged from the movement.

**19. Wu Han**, party official and historian, was the author of the play "Hai Jui Dismissed From Office." This criticized Mao's removal of Peng Dehuai after he opposed The Great Leap Forward. The play would become the impetus for Mao to

challenge the loyalty of party members.

**20. Zhang Chunqiao** was the secretary of the Shanghai Party Committee until he replaced Chen Boda as the leader of the Cultural Revolution Group. He was responsible for incorporating the workers of Shanghai into the Cultural Revolution. He believed that the workers could replace the corrupt managers and run the factories using Maoist thought as a guideline. Zhang developed the Shanghai commune to follow Mao's model for communist society. The commune failed and Zhang was forced to explain this to the people of Shanghai. He was promoted to the party's Standing Committee of the Politburo after the fall of Lin Biao. He finally became Second Vice Premier of the party to Deng Xiaoping but was never appointed to the Premiership.

**21. Zhao Ziyang**, chosen by Deng Xiaoping to be Premier of the State Council in September of 1980, marking the beginning of a new generation of leaders for the Chinese Communist Party. Zhao was one of the first non-Long March era members to attain such a lofty party position.

**22. Zhou Enlai** was appointed Premier of the State Council by Mao in 1949. He provided much of the continuity and stability to the civilian state structure. Zhou was one of Mao's oldest and most trusted comrades. Politically, he was a moderate who tried to hold the government together and had no further party ambitions.

## Appendix B

### The Chinese Communist Party and Government.

Although the party and government have similar structures, this appendix will illustrate the differences between the two. Often individuals will serve in government and party posts simultaneously. The outline of the party and government will be presented to depict the individual systems and their differences.

### The Chinese Communist Party

The party is divided into three basic levels, the center, province and city. Although each of the three has similar hierarchical structures, each is responsible for its individual jurisdiction. The central party is the ideological focus of the party formulating the official party line for all of the levels to follow.

The lower echelons of the party hierarchy report to the upper levels and receive their directives from the higher tiers. This pattern is repeated throughout the three ranks; the central directs the province and the province guides the city. For example, higher party committees have the power to review officials elected by lower congresses and can assign leadership to lower levels without their approval. It should be noted that some city party organizations such as Beijing and

Shanghai have more influence than other provincial structures namely Tibet Ixizangi and Heilongjiang because of their geographical locations and demographics.

The most important party body is the representative congress. All the leading members who form the committees that carry out the actual functions of the party belong to this assembly. The members are sent by their regions to attend the National Party Congress which convenes every five years. (Pursuant to the party constitution, the congress may convene earlier or later than the designated five years if required.)

The Central Committee acts for the Congress and is its most important representative body. The Central Committee is identified by the number of the congress that elected it, with its full meeting known as plenums which are held on an annual basis.

While the Congress is not in session, the daily functions are carried out by its Standing Committee, the Politburo and the Secretaries. In reality, it is the committees that run the party; the committee members have little control over the proceedings and simply ratify the committees' directives, lending legitimacy to decisions. The agenda and nominations for offices are controlled by the Standing Committee of the Congress Presidium which is elected by the congressional

delegates on the day before the congress convenes. During the session, delegates devote most of their time to small groups discussing leadership reports and candidate lists for the Central Committee, the Commission for Discipline Inspection, the Advisory Committee and other smaller Committees.

The Central Committee acts for the Congress and is its most important representative body. The Central Committee is identified by the number of the congress that elected it, with its full meeting known as plenums which are held on an annual basis.

The party leadership is provided by the Secretariat, the Politburo, its Standing Committee and the General Secretary. These posts are elected by the Central Committee; the General Secretary presides over the Central Committee, the Politburo and its Standing Committee. Until Hu Yaobang succeeded Hua Guofeng in 1981, the General Secretary was known as the Party Chairman.

The Standing Committee is comprised of members who chair various Commissions such as the Military Commission. The Politburo and its Standing Committee are the highest decision makers.

The Secretariat is responsible for administering detailed work of the party which would be impossible for the Congress as a whole to undertake. Nine members

constitute the Secretariat, they delegate tasks to lower party departments. Through this bureaucracy, the Politburo controls the execution of daily assignments from the central level down to the basic party groups established in every unit of Chinese society.

The party has a similar structure throughout its levels. The majority of public policy was formulated in the Central Committee of the Party Congress. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao unrivaled leader of the party and the sole dictator of China.

### **The State Structure**

The party is mirrored by its counterpart the State. The major function of the government is to lend legitimacy to the party directives, and to administer party policy through the bureaucracy. This section of the appendix will illustrate the governmental system focusing on the National People's Congress and its divisions as outlined in the State Constitution of 1982.

China has a unified state organization that includes four major hierarchies: the people's congress system, the government, the courts and the procuratorate. The people's congresses are representative assemblies meeting once a year. The government, from the state council to local

administrators, is the executive and administrative bureaucracy of the state. Typically, its highest officials are elected by the people's congress at each level. Officials of the two legal hierarchies, the judiciary and the procuracy, are also elected by the people's congress.

Similar to the party structure, the State has its own National People's Congress which meets to discuss and approve work reports, the state plan, legislative drafts and, during the first session of its term, elect the major officials of government. It is comprised of approximately 3,000 delegates who meet once a year for a five-year term. Delegates are elected by provincial-level people's congresses, the same as in the Party Congress. There are six permanent committees: minorities, law finance, foreign affairs, overseas Chinese, and one responsible for education, science, culture and health. A presidium with a standing committee presides over the sessions and controls the agenda, the routing of legislation, and nominations for offices. The congress gives legitimacy and a popular base, rather than to chart the political course of the country which is the party's responsibility.

The majority of the government's power resides with the standing committee of the National People's Congress with fewer than 200 members, meeting every two months.

The group that heads this council and controls the government's agenda is the chair committee, incorporating the chairman of the standing committee, the vice-chairman, the secretary and a total of twenty-two members. The standing committee delegates issues to subcommittees that are active in coordinating legislation between different governmental organs and in communicating with provincial governments and standing committees. Interlevel contact is encouraged by allowing the leadership of provincial standing committees to attend meetings of the National People's Congress standing committee.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup>The information for the structure of the party and government was obtained from Townsend and Womack, 82-151.



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